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THE **DREWRY'S** LIMITED

# The Icelandic Canadian

Vol. 6

Winnipeg, Man., Winter 1947

No. 2

## *It's Christmas*



*The magic hour approaches—the Eve of Christmas,  
With its gift of joy for the heart.  
But the gift doesn't reach the heart,  
For the heart hasn't time to feel.  
The brain is busy—so are the hands and the feet,  
All preparing for a glittering Christmas—  
More exciting, more turbulent than truly joyful.  
Jostling, pushing, worrying and planning, shoppers  
Throng the street in an agony of speed.  
There are gifts to buy and give, in fair exchange;  
Parties to arrange, and time is fleeting.  
Merchants vie, in fevered competition, for  
Money pouring from the fingers of the shoppers.  
They too are weary.  
A Christmas carol, rich and sweet  
With the love and faith of centuries,  
Suddenly breaks upon the crowded street,  
And a thousand hearts open with keys of memory  
To receive this gift of joy.  
In a shop an old lady seeks to buy heart's delight  
For her grandson with all her hoarded coins.  
A young girl smiles across a counter,  
Spending her last ounce of energy  
In loving service to the old lady.  
Humanity basks in the smile of God and reflects it.  
There is joy in the heart—it's Christmas!*

## EDITORIAL

More than nineteen hundred years ago a child was born to a humble couple from an obscure village. Grown to man's estate, He had a solution for the sorry plight of the world of his day. His solution did not receive much popular support. The indifference and the inertia of people in comfortable circumstances were proof against new doctrines. It was much more pleasant to enjoy the well-ordered life that they were accustomed to lead, and to partake of the pleasures that this world offered, than to undertake the task of making this a better world in which to live. Like Cain, they were not their brothers' keepers. "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost".

For nineteen hundred years a large part of the world has professed to believe in His teachings, and in social contacts and within the small radius of the community it has been more than a profession. Innumerable cases of kindness and neighborliness bear witness to that. But in business and in international affairs a somewhat hypocritical world has given mere lip service to the precepts of the Master. In too many cases have we been prone to look upon Jesus as an impractical visionary, whose precepts sound good, but are impossible of fulfillment in this work-a-day world of ours.

As a matter of fact He was the most practical realist that the world has ever known. His philosophy of life is the soundest that has ever been offered to the human race. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill", he said. He had the profoundest respect for man's accomplishments in the past, his initiative, resourcefulness, and courage.

But with a clearer eye than anyone else He saw what was standing in the way of human happiness. He saw that this fruitful world of ours could produce an abundance of all the commodities necessary for human needs, if all but worked together. If all the energy em-

ployed in the mad scramble for power and wealth, and in seeking vengeance for wrongs real or imaginary were used in the furtherance of human happiness, if all the destructive forces of human character were diverted along constructive channels, what a different place this world of ours would be!

★

He preached a doctrine of faith. A faith in a kindly, loving Supreme Being, who has given us the intelligence of making this life of ours a Paradise on Earth. On a clear night, when amidst the myriad of stars that dot the sky, the Moon shines resplendent in her glory, it is difficult to be an atheist. At such a time the majesty of creation, the wonderful order evident in the Universe must fill one with the realization that all this could not have come by chance. When one considers, too, that all the heavenly bodies are moving according to well-defined laws along unchanging paths; that they never stray an inch from their orbits, and are never a second behind schedule, one cannot but be filled with humility and reverence.

He preached a doctrine of faith in the inherent goodness of the human race, and in Man's slow but sure ascent to a higher destiny. It is difficult to have such a faith at the present time. One is apt to think: "Man is a greater savage than he ever was before." Most assuredly his destructiveness is greater. But when we think of our ancestors, cowering in superstitious fear when the lightning flashed, offering their most beloved as sacrifices to a cruel, capricious God. When we think of their cold, comfortless huts; the dirt, the squalor, the ignorance, the want, the disease that were their lot, we know that some progress has been made. We know that not so long ago women were old while still young in years, worn out by the back-breaking and never ending toil of a home without



conveniences. In all primitive communities the men make the women do all the hard work, while they enjoy themselves. Surely, the emancipation of women is a sign of progress.

But one may ask: How long is it going to be until the stupidity, greed, cruelty, and selfishness still so evident all around us is going to cease to stand in the way of human happiness? We must remember that a few thousand years is but a drop in the ocean of eternity. Inevitably progress is slow, but sure. Most of it is due to the work of a few souls who have the vision and courage to blaze the trail, and in so doing, like Jesus, sacrifice themselves. The world owes much to such men as Confucius, Buddha, Galileo, Edison, Lincoln and Wilson.

He preached a doctrine of hope—hope that rises eternal in the human breast, no matter what calamities have befallen and regardless of the difficulties that face us.

There are times when everything we hoped for, believed in, trusted, lies in ruins at our feet. Our faith is often badly shaken. At such a time, like a beacon on a dark night, hope sustains us. The human race has passed through many a

calamity, suffering, starvation, war. It could not have carried on but for that one God-given quality, **hope**.

He preached a doctrine of charity, which is love. Not a submissive, passive, wishy-washy sort of love, but a red-blooded, creative, hopeful, charitable love, guided by a faith that never wavers.

Jesus knew that there is such a diversity of opinions in the world, so many different creeds, so many different customs, and so many races. All have a great deal of good in them, even if they are not our own. "So many ways, so many creeds, so many paths that wind and wind, whilst just the art of being kind is all this old world needs". This world of ours to-day, so full of misunderstandings between individuals, religious groups, social classes, and nations needs most of all the healing balm of tolerance and charity. "And now abide faith, hope, and charity—these three—but the greatest of these is charity".

★

The Christmas season is dedicated to His message.

A. V.

## *Iceland's Thousand Years*

The book, *Iceland's Thousand Years*, which contains the series of lectures given at the Icelandic Canadian Evening School during its first season, is playing an important part in making the history and literature of Iceland known to Canadians and Americans. Over 1,400 copies have found their way to individuals on this continent. A well known Winnipeg business man has bought forty copies to present to his non-Icelandic friends who are interested in Iceland's culture. Universities in most of the Canadian provinces and many states of America have ordered the book as well as historical societies and book publishing houses in

various parts of the country. Orders have been received from universities in Sweden, South America, South Africa and Australia.

The book will make a most acceptable Christmas gift. The first edition is selling at \$1.50 per copy, while the bound edition sells for \$2.50 each. There is a discount of 25% if three or more copies are ordered by the same person. The book is postpaid and on request gift orders will be sent direct, with gift cards enclosed. Order from: Mrs. H. F. Danielson, 869 Garfield St., Winnipeg, Canada.

## Shoal Lake Sketches

By W. KRISTJANSON

### LOCATION AND FIRST SETTLEMENT

Shoal Lake, in the Manitoba Inter-Lake district, was, in 1886, about thirty miles long, ten miles wide in the south, and two miles wide in the north. The distance from the southern end of the lake to Stonewall, is about fifteen miles.

In 1880, the charter for the Winnipeg Hudson Bay Railway and Steamship Company was granted. The proposed route was from Winnipeg, along the west shore of Shoal Lake, and north, some distance to the east of Lake Manitoba. On October 9, 1886, the first sod of the first stage, to Oak Point, was turned. Construction proceeded, and steel was laid for forty miles, to Harperville.

Of settlement in the neighborhood of Shoal Lake there was at this time the Roman Catholic mission at St. Laurent, the Hudson's Bay Company trading post at Oak Point, a few English settlers at Erinview and also half-way up the east shore of Shoal Lake, a little knot of about four English families at Seamo, seven miles south-west of the northern end of the lake, and a scattering of Metis, chiefly along Lake Manitoba. The Stonewall district was settled.

Following the collapse of the boom in Winnipeg, 1882, many of the approximately 773 Icelandic residents of the city contemplated a move. In the Icelandic settlement in Argyle, commenced 1880—81, all the homesteads had been quickly taken, and New Iceland, recently inundated by floods, did not offer an inviting prospect.

In 1886, Freeman B. Anderson of Winnipeg, and the Icelandic Framfarafélag (Progress Society) were instrumental in securing government aid in prospecting for a suitable territory for settlement. Anderson and Björn Lindal, who on his own had already explored the possibility

of an Icelandic settlement at the west coast, were appointed by the government to do the exploring. They proceeded to the Qu'Appelle Valley, in Saskatchewan, but found the land there taken. Then they went to the Pipestone country, in western Manitoba. Here they found bald prairie, light, somewhat stony soil, and little hayland. This locality was not ruled out of consideration by Anderson, who had in mind agricultural development, but Björn Lindal centered his thoughts on stock-raising, and he was not satisfied. A third journey was made, the government providing a guide and horses, and paying other expenses; this time to the region east of Lake Manitoba. The explorers went as far as township 22, close to the present village of Mulvihill. Of this locality Lindal says: "All the country was then dry and grass was most abundant in all low-lying portions. It was wooded, affording material for the construction of temporary log-buildings and a supply of firewood. I liked this place."

At a meeting of the Progress Society, Anderson and Lindal gave their reports, Anderson favoring agriculture, Lindal advocating cattle raising. The Hudson Bay Railway was a consideration in favor of the Inter-Lake district.

In the spring and summer of 1887 the Álfavatns (Swan Lake) settlement was founded. The majority of the first settlers located in the Lundar area, but a detached group proceeded a few miles to the north-east, to townships twenty and twenty one, range three, in the district generally known as Suffren, but referred to by the earliest settlers only as "Siberia".

Anderson continued his roving career, in Winnipeg, Paris, and, eventually, Iceland.

Lindal did not locate immediately in

the new settlement, but employed himself in transporting thither settlers and their effects.

"I transported many of the prospective settlers before taking up residence myself. These trips were no pleasure jaunts. We took turns staying awake to keep smudges going for the stock, for the swarm of flies was almost unbearable."

Houses were built, and the prospect seemed bright. In Siberia, in the first year of settlement, a community library was started, and lumber was set aside for the building of a school. More settlers came.

The summer of 1890 was exceptionally rainy. Low-lying land was flooded, and the hay-crop spoiled. During the summer, two families moved out, to the north end of Shoal Lake, Kristjan and Margret Sigurðson, with their unmarried son, Magnus, and Jakob and Helga Crawford.

Kristjan Sigurðson, Magnus Kristjanson and Jakob Crawford commenced haying in the new locality in July. They had a team of oxen belonging to Crawford, a team of steers belonging to Sigurðson and his son-in-law, Daniel Backman, and a team of oxen belonging to Þorsteinn Hordal. The mower, a "Warrior", was the joint property of Magnus Kristjanson and Jakob Crawford. Their temporary shelter was under canvas.

During haying, timber was felled for both houses, and about September building was completed. Kristjan Sigurðson's was the first house to be erected. The flooring, of white poplar, had been prepared with a hand saw by the owner himself, for his house in Siberia. The chinks were plastered with clay, and the roof was thatched with straw.

When the house was ready, Mrs. Sigurðson joined her husband and son, and with her came a married daughter, Mrs. Daniel Backman, whose husband was working in Winnipeg. Later in the fall, Þorsteinn and Ragnhildur Hordal and Bjorn and Sigríður Hordal established themselves two miles to the south-east, along the lake shore.

The advance party at Shoal Lake gave a good report of the locality, with its belt of grass-lands along the lake shore, and the following summer, 1891, most of the settlers in Siberia moved to Shoal Lake. Shortly, everyone moved from that locality and it became but a name and a memory.

In addition to the settlers already mentioned, the following came from Siberia: Arni Freeman, Bjorn Lindal, Sveinbjorn Sigurðson, Þorlakur Eiríksson, Nikulas Snædal, Jakob Jonson, Isleifur (Guðjonson) Johnson, Sveinn Sveinsson, Bessi Tomasson, Guðmundur Einarson, Jón Hannesson, Þorgils Asmundson.

#### PERSONAL GLIMPSES

To indicate the background of the settlement a brief account of some of the early pioneers is now in order: where they came from, and their previous experiences in the New World.

Kristjan Sigurðson came to Canada in 1887, then aged fifty-two. Immediately on arrival in Winnipeg, he and his son, Magnus, proceeded to work on the C.P.R., near Moose Jaw. Another son, Sigurbjorn, who subsequently settled in the district, spent his first summer on the Fulcher farm, twelve miles north of Winnipeg.

Jakob Crawford came to Canada in 1876. He spent the first winter with the ten soldiers who formed the military cordon at Netley Creek during the small-pox quarantine of the New Iceland settlement. Subsequently he was employed on steamboats plying on the Saskatchewan River, from Lake Winnipeg to Edmonton. He served as a volunteer in the North-West Rebellion of 1885, and there met with the first Icander he had seen for seven years. Frontier life seems to have had a strong attraction for him, for in 1892 he moved to Westbourne, Manitoba, and then to Athabasca Landing.

Magnus Kristjanson spent his first winter on a farm seventeen miles south

of Winnipeg, and then worked on the Morris-Brandon branch, west of Miami.

Porsteinn Hordal arrived at Gimli 1876, with the "large group". His wife, Ragnhildur, was the one member of the family to suffer severely from the small-pox, and she also had a tale to tell of walking on the ice from Gimli to Winnipeg, for employment, and of sleeping in winter on the floor of an unheated room. Forced out of New Iceland by the disastrous flood of 1880, the family moved to Winnipeg, and, later, to Cavalier, North Dakota. The struggle for bare existence there was so grim, and the prospect so bleak, that the move to Shoal Lake was made.

Bjorn Lindal came to Canada in 1878, aged twenty-five years. On arrival in Toronto, he had sixty cents in his purse. He began work on a farm near Toronto. At first his pay was twenty-five cents per day, but after a week this was raised, unsolicited, to fifty cents. In the fall, Lindal moved to the Icelandic settlement in Minnesota. There he worked on a farm, on a railroad, and clerked in a store. To Winnipeg he moved in 1882.

Bjorn Thorsteinson came to Canada in 1887, and in that year worked on the railroad at Manitou, Manitoba.

Arni Freeman came to Winnipeg in 1883. He was one of the first group of settlers in the Swan Lake-Siberia district, and he and Isleifur Johnson were the first to build. At that time his possessions consisted of two oxen, five cows and three younger stock, and an old wagon.

Isleifur Johnson came to Canada in 1883, worked on the Canadian Pacific Railroad for some time, farmed for about a year at Boundary Creek (Winnipeg Beach), and moved to Siberia in 1887. On his arrival in Siberia, Johnson possessed one ox, two cows, and a Red River cart.

Nikulas Snædal came to Canada in 1883, spent some time in New Iceland, and a year in Winnipeg.

The first settlers cushioned the arrival

of those who followed. In 1894, Daniel Sigurðson, brother of Kristjan Sigurðson, arrived with a large family. Kristjan had built an addition to his house, where Daniel received accommodation the first winter. Then Daniel, in turn, provided temporary quarters for several successive families, four of whom stayed a whole year. Daniel came direct from Iceland, where his home for twenty-three years had been at Hólmlátur, a farmstead where many centuries before a man, known as Eric the Red, accompanied by his ten year old son, Leifur, stayed one winter while endeavoring to secure settlers for his Greenland colony.

Log houses, built in sheltering bluffs began to fringe both shores of the lake and the settlement was taking roots. There was abundance of hay, and game in the woods. At first the lake was low and fish did not pass the Narrows, so that some settlers went to Swan Creek to fish, but soon the lake rose and there was a good supply of fish. The hunters brought home partridges, grouse and ducks, as well as rabbits and larger game.

But conditions were difficult and progress slow. The cattle, in summer, were often driven miles away by the blistering swarm of flies and search for them might take hours. The sheep had to be guarded from the wily coyotes. Supplies had to be brought in from Stonewall and Winnipeg, the latter point over eighty miles away by the trail that wound its way around bluffs and sloughs. If there was serious illness, it meant a journey to Winnipeg. About 1892, a great fire swept through the bush on both sides of the lake and came very near to destroying some of the homes, although the little settlement was miraculously saved. Smoke hung in the air as far south as North Dakota and the glow of the fire was visible there at night.

But little by little the nucleus of the herds of cattle and the flocks of sheep grew, and addition was made to the woefully inadequate stock of farm implements. Those who had been compelled



to do their haying in Siberia with scythes, acquired mowers. Þorlakur Eiríksson had brought a team of horses with him to the north settlement, and now others acquired horses.

Immediately on settlement, there was the beginning of social life and organized community effort. A reading society was organized in Siberia, 1887, and continued its activities in Shoal Lake. In 1894 and 1895, respectively, the first two schools were opened.

The first children born in Siberia were Hermann Johnson and Guðný (Sigurdson) Halldorson. The first child born in the Shoal Lake district was Guðni Backman, son of Daniel and Hólmfríður Backman. This was in November, 1891.

Very soon there was need of a cemetery. An infant's grave appeared, and then another, in the little plot located on Kristjan Sigurðsson's homestead. Jörundur Guðbrandsson was buried in the fall of 1894. He came to Shoal Lake with his son-in-law, Daniel Sigurðson. In Iceland he had been a prosperous farmer and a noted horseman and rider, but now he was seventy four years of age and his days of activity numbered. He derived pleasure from puttering around, gathering sticks for firewood. Such a supply he had not been used to on the bare Icelandic countryside. He passed to his rest a few months after his arrival in the new world.

Settlers continued to move in. About 1894, Thorarinn Breckman, another veteran of the North-West Rebellion, located in the district, temporarily. In 1895 Jonas Halldorson, father-in-law of Björn Hordal, herded his flock of sheep from North Dakota, by way of Gretna and Winnipeg. Sigurður Eyjolfson drove a team of horses from west of Yorkton, Saskatchewan, leaving on the fourth of May and arriving on the fourth of June. Sigurbjörn Guðmundson came from the Thingvalla settlement in Saskatchewan. Some came direct from Iceland.

The first permanent settlers, Kristjan Sigurðson and Magnus, and the Hordals,

originated from Dalasýsla (the Dales County) on the west coast of Iceland. Some of the other settlers hailed from the same county, and the counties immediately to the south, but many other parts of the island were represented, Björn Lindal coming from Strandasýsla (the Strand County), and Arni Freeman from Þingeyjarsýsla (Thing Island County).

#### THE SETTLEMENT TAKES SHAPE

In 1897, after steel having been laid for forty miles, the bright prospects entertained by the pioneers in the district were considerably dimmed when the Hudson Bay Railway project was abandoned. Also the level of the lake began to rise. A brook became a deep and a fast flowing stream. Drainage into Lake Manitoba was attempted, with no effect on the level of Shoal Lake. Nature, however, presently took a hand and the floods subsided.

Beginning 1902, a notable influx of settlers took place. Fresh floods had inundated the north portion of New Iceland, especially Isafold and Big Island, and in approximately a two year period more than 120 persons, young and old, migrated to Shoal Lake. In many cases the government provided new homesteads for the old, but this was meagre compensation for the losses suffered. Johann Straumfjorð abandoned a prosperous farm at Engey (Goose Island), valued before the inundation at 4-5,000 dollars. These new arrivals settled to the west, north and east of Shoal Lake, with a cluster of about ten families in the western part, near the tiny Lake Peculiar.

Prominent among the new arrivals were the homeopathic doctors, Johann Straumfjorð and Petur Bjarnason. Rev. Magnus Skaptason, in Fróði, calls the former "one of the most distinguished of the Icelandic pioneers in America". Straumfjorð arrived from Iceland in 1874. After six weeks at Kinmount, he

(Continued on page 39)

## *Winter's Night*

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Oh, hitch your steeds to the sleigh again  
And take me dashing across the plain.  
With your grip so firm on the frozen line,  
A careless joy in all is mine.

I lean my head to the back of the sleigh,  
And cares are blown on the breeze away,  
Senses alert to each sound and sight  
That quickens the pulse on a winter's night.

Some are fancied and some are real—  
All akin to my soul I feel.  
Swiftly the bare-limbed trees glide by  
Like delicate etchings against the sky.

The moon weaves a filigree pattern bright  
Of brittle, shimmering crystal light  
Upon that virginal waste of snow  
Where shadowy figures come and go.

Come mystic forms in a fairy dance;  
Startled, the ponies wheeze and prance.  
Oh, could the cause of their sudden fear  
Be an elfin note on a sensitive ear?

The lure of such music, wild or serene,  
The treacherous charm of a fairy queen,  
Are not to be reckoned by horse or man,  
So hasten to leave them behind if you can.

Far to the north, each gorgeous fold  
Held in place by a star of gold,  
A shining curtain, veiling the sky,  
Is shading something from mortal eye.

Is it the secret of sorrow and mirth,  
Of life and death on our woe-filled earth,  
Of love and faith, of doubt and fear,  
Of the bitter laugh and the tender tear?

When hearts are open and blithe and free—  
Not even then are we meant to see  
The secret beyond the northern light,  
So let's be carefree and gay tonight.

CAROLINE GUNNARSON

## *The Eruption of Mount Hekla 1947*

ED. NOTE. — This is the third in a series of articles from Iceland written for this magazine. We all were shocked to hear of the death of the author, Steinþór Sigurðsson, who on November 2, last, was killed while taking moving pictures of the lava fields of Mount Hekla. He was struck by one of those glowing masses of volcanic matter, called volcanic bombs, thrown out of the craters of the mountain. Steinþór was a university graduate, holding a degree of Master of Science. He was the executive head of the Research Council of Iceland, a lecturer in the Grammar School in Reykjavik and a professor in the Engineering Department of the University of Iceland. He was chairman of the National Committee in charge of skiing, an enthusiastic skier himself and an energetic traveller. But above all he was a man who placed service first no matter what the danger, as the article itself shows so clearly. Of him it can be truly said that he gave life itself at the post of duty. The widow of the late Mr. Sigurðsson is a daughter of Jónas Jónsson (frá Hriflu), well known to us of the West. In the translation a few place-names have been dropped as they would be of little assistance to the Western reader. — W. J. L.

### VOLCANISM IN ICELAND

There are no volcanoes in Iceland which erupt continuously but there are many volcanic structures where eruptions have taken place. There are records of heavy eruptions at no less than five places outside of Mount Hekla. In other areas there have been lesser eruptions, often at the same places and at fairly regular intervals. One can mention Grim's-Lakes, where, in modern times, eruptions have occurred almost every ten years, and Katla-Chasm where, within recorded history, there have been sixteen eruptions, which have usually occurred at about fifty year intervals. But the best known volcano in Iceland is Mount Hekla. There are 24 recorded eruptions of Hekla or in its immediate vicinity.

Since the end of the glacial period volcanic eruptions have generally occurred in the middle part of the island, along a line from south-west to north-east. In the west and north-west and the east part of the island there have not been any eruptions within that period.

It is generally thought that volcanic structures are limited to conical shaped mountains, as for instance Mount Vesuvius, but actually such mountains are only one type of volcanic structures. In Iceland there are many types of volcanic structures and the most common type is

the volcanic rift or chasm, where lava has been forced up through a long rift. Small craters, often not far apart, have been formed in these rifts but in some places it is difficult to trace where the lava has broken through.

### MOUNT HEKLA

Mount Hekla is a volcano which has been formed on one of these rifts. After many eruptions it has been gradually built up out of volcanic matter and is now 4500 feet high from sea level but the land around it is only from 600 to 1800 feet above sea level. Mount Hekla is a ridge about 5 miles long and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide at the base. The direction of the ridge is from south-west to north-east and thus corresponds to the general direction of rifts in that part of the island. At the south-west end, Hekla has the classical volcano form — a conic-shaped volcano. From there one can see to the end of the ridge.

Mount Hekla is covered with slag and lava which have poured from it, and the surrounding area consists of lava varying in age and more or less covered with ashes and pumice. Here and there hills and volcano-craters stand out over the lava fields. The lava from Hekla is dapple-gray; it resembles enormous piles of loose rocks as if a huge rock-crusher had ground solid rock into

stones and boulders most of which are about 6 inches in diameter but some of the boulders are as much as a few yards across. These rocks have been piled up in a most irregular and uneven way, forming high hills with deep hollows in between. It is not difficult to travel over the lava where it is to some extent covered with ashes and pumice. The same is true of lava which is covered with plant growth — something quite common where the lava is old. But it is difficult to cross bare lava and it can be done only on foot.

Mount Hekla is covered with snow a large part of the year and on the north-west side there are small glaciers where the snow never disappears. The result is that there usually is a fog bank over the mountain and sometimes many weeks pass before the summit becomes visible. For that reason weather conditions have to be watched carefully by anyone seeking to reach the summit. In clear weather the view from the top extends very far as Hekla towers over all other mountains in that area.

#### THE ERUPTION IN 1947

As this is being written Mount Hekla is in eruption. As yet one cannot give a clear picture of what is happening nor state with any degree of certainty what effect the eruption will have on vegetation and weather conditions this summer. Ashes and pumice have fallen over inhabited land and it will be difficult to live on some of the farms and a number of people will suffer serious damage as a result of the fall of ashes. Even though the loss in agricultural produce will be considerable it will not be catastrophic. Lava has poured down from the Hekla craters in many directions and by now it covers about 8 square miles. But most of the land covered was not cultivated.

In this article I shall confine myself to only a few phases of the eruption.

MARCH 29, 1947

I am awakened by the telephone at 7:05 A. M. The Weather Bureau informs me that a peculiar bank of fog is rising up in the east in the direction of Mount Hekla. I immediately contact various geologists in Reykjavík. Through the telephone we soon obtain authentic information that Hekla is erupting and that the eruption commenced about 7 o'clock. A Douglas Dakota plane is ordered and most of the geologist fly east in it, but Jóhannes Áskelsson, a geologist and Einar Pálsson, an engineer, and I travel in two jeeps. We are ready to proceed at 9 o'clock but it is decided that we should not start ahead of the aeroplane. It takes time to gather 22 passengers together, geologists, newspapermen, photographers, etc, and it is almost ten o'clock when we start. It is quite clear and frosty. The dense cloud of smoke and volcanic matter, as we view it from Reykjavík, is immense. Between 7 and 8 o'clock it is unbelievably high. A perpendicular column of steam reaches up at that distance to an angle of 12 - 14°; the height is between 16 and 20 miles. South of it is a cloud of ashes and pumice, resembling a black carpet, stretching far in a southerly direction. After 8 o'clock the column drops suddenly to a height of only about ten miles. The eruption has eased somewhat. We did not know then that during this short span of time over 50% had already taken place of what was going to happen during the whole eruption. To the south of Mt. Hekla the ground was covered with 20 inches of pumice. In Fljótshlíð, a distance of twenty miles from the mountain, the layer was 4 inches thick, and on the south coast, 30 miles away, there was a layer of ashes and pumice about an inch thick. At this distance the pumice stones were as much as an inch in diameter. While the ashes were falling there was complete darkness. The captain on a ship a short distance to the south of the coast called it: "darkness black as a gramophone record".



We drive to the east. It is still winter and a few days ago roads were blocked with snow. After a five hour drive we reach the farmstead closest to Mt. Hekla. On the way we get a report through radio messages from the aeroplane. Streams of lava are pouring to the north at great speed but to the south the steam and pumice conceal everything. There is a heavy stream of water running in a south-westerly direction. The column of steam drops as the day draws to a close. Now it is only about 2 miles high and towers over the clouds of ashes. It seems that steam is pressing up from one end of the mountain ridge to the other but in two places the columns are by far the highest.

On our way we had to dig ourselves through some snowdrifts and now we have come to the end of the road. But few obstructions can stop a jeep. We keep on to the north of Mt. Hekla and pitch tents about 5 miles straight north of the mountain where visibility is excellent. The banks of steam and ashes are heading to the south. There is a constant roaring from the eruption and intermittent heavy explosions. As darkness approaches the eruption has an awesome appearance. The streams of molten lava on the side of the mountain appear dark red and there is a reddish gleam on the clouds above the craters. Tatters of glowing lava are constantly being hurled high up into the air. They resemble splashes or daubs of molten metal, most irregularly shaped. They break in the air and turn in all directions. Many of them drop into the craters again but there is a steady rain of them down the mountain side and as they strike the ground they roll far down the slopes. Most of these masses of molten lava are hurled almost 500 yards into the air but some go higher. They are of all sizes, some many yards thick. Later we found one that had come down 1200 yards from one of the craters and it had travelled all the way through the air. It was 30 x 15 x 6 feet in size.

There is an old superstition that here was a door leading to hell and that these tatters were souls of the unfortunate, tossed up from the inferno below and that the roaring was their cries of anguish.

We watched this imposing scene for a long time and then retired into our sleeping bags. During the first hour, whenever there was a specially loud explosion, we rushed out to the door of the tent to see what was happening. But when nothing extraordinary occurred we calmed down and soon fell sound asleep.

MARCH 30

The eruption is similar to that of the night before. It is clear and freezing. We proceed on one of the jeeps in an easterly direction in order to get near one of the lava streams. For three hours we struggle on over old lava, partly covered with vegetation, and thread our way along the ridge, between the snow banks. About two miles from the north side of the base of Mt. Hekla we have to leave the jeep. We are 500 yards above sea level. Everything is covered with snow and on top of the snow there is a layer of black ashes. Here the physical features have a most peculiar appearance. As we plow through the snow we have to break the crust and the travelling is very fatiguing. Now the thick smoke rises high up above our heads and there is a constant fall of ashes. At first they were as fine powder but they became coarser as we approached the mountain. After about two hours of difficult travelling in a south-easterly direction we reach a low ridge and close by our feet is a wide stream of jet-black lava. Clouds of steam white and dark red, rise up from the lava, and because of the terrific upward pressure of the heat, hurtle at great speed high into the heavens.

It is now 30 hours since the eruption commenced and during that time the lava has travelled about 2½ miles. The

head of the lava stream is about 45 feet high and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide. It pushes on at a rate of about 40 yards an hour. We note how rocks of volcanic slag, which are on top of the lava, move slowly on to the edge and then roll down into the snow. The lava head is of a reddish hue, more or less glowing; it is viscous and resembles thick tar. Many of the larger pieces of slag, still partly glowing, are stuck in the lava. At the edge of the lava head they overhang and then drop down like molten glass which has been heated by a gas flame. Finally they are rent into ropy pieces like half-kneaded dough which has been pulled apart.

We walk up beside the lava field in the direction of the mountain. The roaring becomes steadily louder and the bursts of explosion are so sharp that in order to protect the ear drums one has to keep his mouth open. I can imagine the tumultuous noise being similar to that of a battleship in a heavy naval engagement. Sometimes the sounds resembled that of rockets fired from somewhere and passing over us and we discussed whether they actually were fragments of slag hurtling from the craters over our heads. The heaviest explosions create visible waves of sound. A few concentric rings, as when a stone is thrown into water, are formed around a crater and, because of the speed of the sound, the rings grow in size very rapidly until they reach over half the heaven. Then you hear the explosion. It is really light that breaks in a very special way as the waves of sound sweep through the air and thus they become visible. Another phenomenon of a somewhat similar type, could be observed over some of the craters the first three days of the eruption when the explosions were unusually violent. This phenomenon consists of vibrating columns of air, where the nodes could be seen at an interval of nearly 150 feet.

By now we began to find some volcanic bombs — rounded masses of volcanic matter — which had fallen into

the snow. At first they were small and far apart but they became larger and more numerous as we approached the mountain. At the foot of it the bombs are more than three feet in diameter, and are strewn fairly close together. The lava crater is only about 800 yards away. There you can see terrific explosions of steam, one following another. After each one clouds of steam hurtle up in a few seconds to a height of 500 to 1,000 yards. Here neither lava nor slag is thrown up.

A little further up the mountain a dense black cloud rises up a tremendous distance. We cannot judge the height because it spreads out completely over us. Rocks are hurled high up into the air and some of them drop on the edge a short distance above us. Still we push on up the slope, which is about  $30^\circ$ , and proceed in the direction of the lava crater. The slope is covered with volcanic bombs so that the snow cannot be seen. We reached within 200 — 300 yards of the crater and deemed it dangerous to go any further. We had, in any case, obtained about all the photographs we desired.

#### APRIL 13

The eruption has decreased very considerably. There is a steady stream of lava flowing in a southerly direction from a crater close to the base of the mountain. A few of us want to go up to the crater. We run into a violent and blinding snowstorm. The temperature is at the freezing point. We edge ourselves on and after some time we meet another stream of lava. We are wet and cold. We go out on the lava-stream which has almost come to a stand still. The blue stones are so hot that the moisture on them is at the boiling point but the slag is only nicely warm. Glowing rocks glitter down in the hollows.

Very soon it is calm and fine weather. We select a few stones which are comfortably cool and we sit down. With the

heat from the lava we warm some milk, toast bread and boil eggs and in a few minutes our clothes are completely dry.

On the other side of the lava field it is equally calm and fine weather. During these days the constant pressure upwards all around Mount Hekla has been so great that the direction of the wind has not made any difference. Within a short while we reach the crater. Here is a spring of glowing matter. The lava, thick as heavy mud, slowly oozes out of the crater and continues on like a heavy stream trapped between two banks of solid snow and ice. But here the banks consist of slag and rocks and the river is a glowing molten mass, the surface temperature being about 960°. Very soon slag forms on the surface and only here and there can one see the red-hot embers.

This river has been flowing for three months. As already stated it acts as a stream within frozen confines. Sometimes ice forms over it and the stream of lava goes on as a river under ice, but all of a sudden it bursts out from within its confines and belches over the edges and covers new territory. In some places, hills, a hundred feet high, have been formed and whole valleys have been filled in.

Further up the mountain there are constant explosions. With each explosion slag is thrown up from the craters and hills of slag are formed all around. In this way the top has been raised over 50 yards. On the south end of the mountain ridge there is a large crater a few hundred yards in diameter and over three hundred feet high.

#### APRIL 27

Now we are close to the top of the mountain. This is the second time within two days. Yesterday we went up but struck a snowstorm and could not see anything. We proceeded along the north side of the rift almost its whole length.

Here the eruption has subsided but in the craters there are numerous sulphur and steam hot springs. Everywhere, at the bottom of the breaks, there are glowing embers of smouldering lava.

The weather has been better today but there is a fog at the top of the mountain. We have waited in the fog a short distance from the top crater, just as close as we dared go. There are constant bursts of explosion and we hear the heavy bombs whiz by. At first the sound appears distant and then it becomes louder as the speed is increased until at last these masses of molten volcanic matter crash into the ground in the fog in front of us. Visibility is only a hundred yards.

All of a sudden the eruption increases in violence. There are loud explosions and a few moments later the massy bombs fall all around us. They are a glowing red and as they drop on the ground it becomes apparent that they are soft, almost like butter. We move 200 yards away. Now the fog lifts. It is only a short distance to the crater cone at the top. The explosions are about 20 seconds apart and after each one a dense smoke and glowing rocks shoot up many hundred feet. Most of the rocks drop down into the crater or on the edge and then roll down the sides of the cone. It would mean sure and immediate death to go right to the cone or up along the sides.

★

The history of the people of Iceland up to the present time has in many ways been moulded by crop failures and diseases in livestock caused by volcanic eruptions. The present one appears to have followed the pattern of former eruptions of Mount Hekla. Fortunately the nation is now better prepared than ever before to endure the trials and tribulations which follow in the wake of volcanic eruptions.

**Steinþór Sigurðsson**

## *Hobnobbing With Hobbies*

By CAROLINE GUNNARSON

### UNAIDED BY THE SENSE OF SIGHT

Unaided by the sense of sight, much artistic beauty would be a lost delight to most of us. Certainly the creation of exquisite objects of wood, horn and metal, or finely wrought furniture, would remain far beyond the borderline of our wildest dreams. Indeed simple every day tasks would seem difficult enough of accomplishment. But true

vast North-American continent medical science might possess the power to banish his blindness. A boy of fourteen, he journeyed to Canada, where he was received by a brother, Stefan, who had settled in Winnipeg a few years previously. Stefan is remembered by many Winnipeggers for the spontaneous charm of his light verse and his native skill with brush and pencil. His painting of a lion's head is a cherished possession of



Furniture and other articles made by Eirikur Scheving

creative genius is not vanquished by obstacles that defeat lesser mortals. It surmounts the seemingly unsurmountable and somehow finds its own medium of expression.

Such is the genius of Eirikur Jonsson Scheving, of Lundar, Manitoba. Born in Iceland on November 11th, 1874, both his eyes had become almost sightless when he was two years old. A faint glimmer of light remained until he reached the age of thirty, when total darkness overtook him. Eirikur Scheving cherished a hope that somewhere in the

our famous poet, Guttormur J. Guttormsson, at Riverton.

After spending several years with friends in the Shoal Lake district, and when repeated efforts to restore the power of sight to his eyes had failed, Mr. Scheving was invited to make his home with two cousins who farmed near Lundar, Manitoba. Upon their death, a daughter of one of them, Mrs. Bjorg Bjornson, stepped to her blind cousin's side and immediately made him one of her family.

Numerous articles in the Bjornson



home speak eloquently of Mr. Scheving's skill. There is a graceful work table with many compartments; an upholstered leatherette chair with foot stool to match, to say nothing of a cribbage board, leather handbag, suitcase and hat box. Beautifully panelled chests of drawers are to be found in other rooms, also picture frames, magazine stands, smoker's stands and small boxes. The family library is accommodated in a sectional bookcase of his making, while neatly constructed cupboards with handy shelves and drawers add a touch of convenience to the kitchen. His tables range from the graceful and ornamental, designed to hold their place in the parlour, to others that are valued for their sturdy utility.

Mr. Scheving's walking sticks are things of rare artistic beauty. Horn, shading from the light grey of domestic cattle to black buffalo is fashioned into tablets and threaded on rods of steel, then polished to a mellow lustre. So flawlessly are the tablets fitted together that the finished article delights a perfect vision only as an exquisite whole. It is impossible to feel where one tablet joins another. Mr. Scheving passes his lips over the surface, and when they can feel nothing but unbroken smoothness, he is satisfied with the job.

A man of keen intellect and discriminating tastes, Mr. Scheving is an ardent lover of fine literature. The best in prose and poetry is often read to him by friends of kindred interests. Some years ago he mastered the art of reading with his fingers, and books in Braille are regularly sent to him through the mail.

Mr. Scheving is quite an accomplished musician. A valued member of a church choir at Lunda, he is also a good organist. But it is the violin that responds best to the sensitive touch of this blind man's fingers, and he has obliged many an entertainment committee by contributing violin solos at community concerts.

## TO ART HE HAS A TALENT TO PAY

To many of his fellow-folk Dr. August Blondal has for years been the man to turn to when illness or fear of illness befell them. Yet it was to art that he first discovered he had a talent to pay. Since early childhood all the odd moments he could squeeze from the busy student years and a strenuous professional life have been devoted to this first love. Guided by his sensitive spirit and sure, deft fingers, India ink, water colors, oils and pastels have taken shape and life in portraits, scenes from nature and richly colored pictures of still life.

Dr. Blondal has had no technical training. He has simply yielded to that driving urge for expression which is the better half of all creative talent.

When I visited their home, it was Mrs. Blondal who somehow imparted to me the feeling of her husband's toil, and ardour for his hobby. The two seem to have shared it so wholeheartedly through the years that she has been completely drawn into it with him. Pointing to two beautiful scenes from Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park, she said they were really companion pictures. Both had been painted in two different years, on that particular day in June which marks the couple's wedding anniversary. This date is never forgotten or neglected. It is a treasure of accumulated time to be collected each year and spent to their delight. The traditional thing to do is to drive out of the city, and Mrs. Blondal has often spent hours sitting in the car while the doctor set up his easel to capture a moment's fleeting beauty and confine it to his canvas.

There is no garish shock of color in the two pictures of Assiniboine Park. The shades are delicately blended into the fresh bloom and tender green of early summer, and to us who know our country, sky, clouds and light are truly Manitoba.

In an unframed pastel a bowl of garden flowers—natives of the family's own back yard—pour their wealth of color

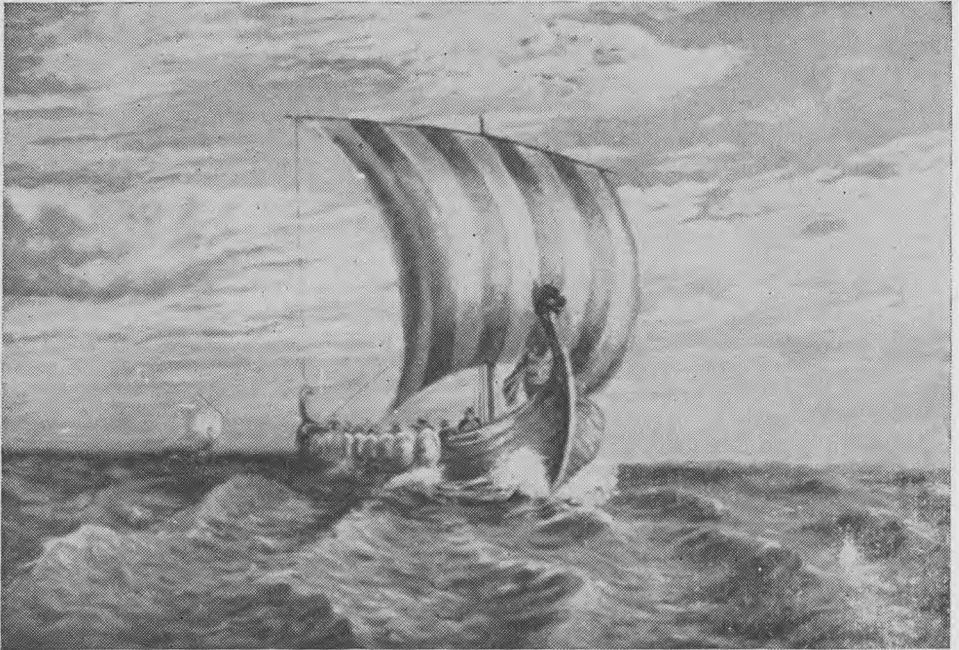
against a background of red so rich, and yet so soft, that it defies description.

In the dining room are two huge copies of the early masters—pen and ink portraits from the life of Christ. Dr. Blondal has reproduced these masterpieces with a sensitive touch and meticulous attention to detail.

A beautiful original picture of still life hangs over the sideboard. Against a tapestry of subdued richness a silver

foamy clouds above are spectacular, and Dr. Blondal would leave his bed at dawn to search the sky for clouds that might fit into his picture. The finished piece of art is a delight to those who relish this chapter of history as living drama.

There are pen and ink portraits of such men of history as Abraham Lincoln and David Lloyd George. A living thing is the portrait of Captain Sigtryggur Jonasson. The hard and gentle lines



**Leifur Eirikson on his way to America, in the year 1000.**

coffee service glows lustrously. Nearby a bowl of fruit, from which a banana has fallen blends and gradually melts into a mere reflection in the polished wood of a table-top. This subtle blending of colors into mellow richness is a baffling miracle to naive admirers who love pictures simply for the beauty of them.

The ship that bore Columbus to America and the sea underneath it are done in bold, clear blues. The scene is August Blondal's own conception of a trim proud galleon, breasting the waves, and bearing adventurers to a new land. The

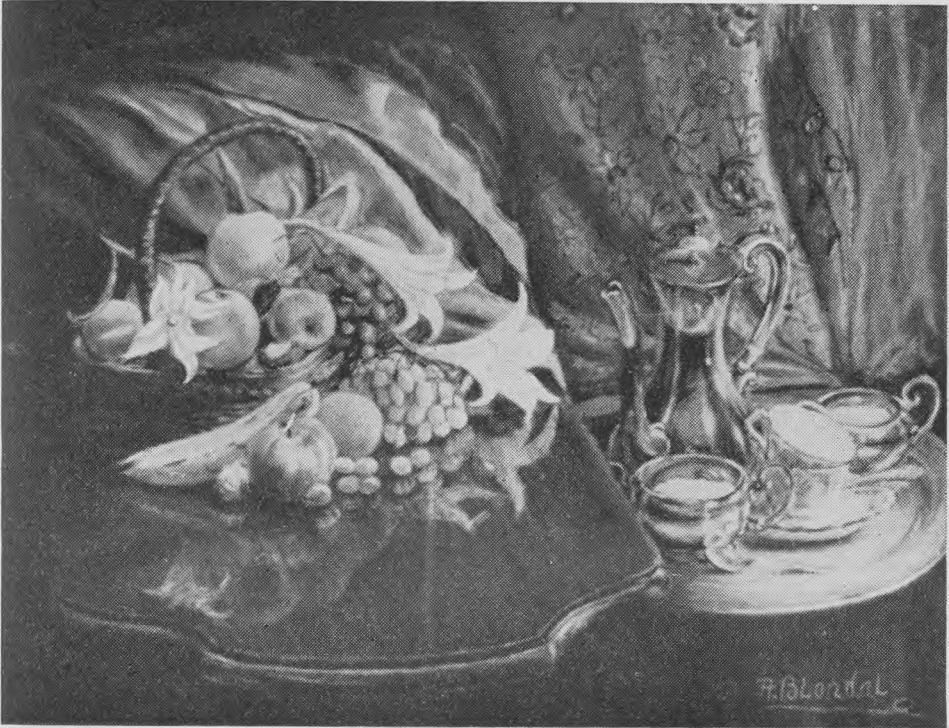
drawn into this face of a tough old pioneer are a fascinating study in character. This picture was reproduced in The Winnipeg Tribune with a story of the Captain.

Dr. Blondal designed the fireplace in the basement rumpus room of his home, and chose the stones of which it is built. In a plaque of Tyndall stone set in the center he has cut a map of Iceland. On the mantel is a replica of the Memorial Cairn at Gimli, which he also designed.

Despite his devotion to the fine art of painting, this busy professional man has also found time to give to constructive

community activities. He was founder and first president of The Winnipeg Folk Arts Society, which functioned in Winnipeg for many years. Besides serving on the First Lutheran Church Board for a number of years, he was the first president of the Men's Club of that church, and also served as president of The Icelandic Choral Society.

age of five. After five years farming, the family moved to Winnipeg, where the doctor grew up and obtained his education. Graduating in Medicine in 1913, he practiced for five years at Lunda, Manitoba. In 1920 he went abroad, doing a year's post-graduate work in London, Glasgow and Paris. On his return he established a permanent practice in



Still life in oils

Most people associated with the Icelandic community in Winnipeg have been entertained by Dr. Blondal's illustrated lectures. This voluntary work involves more than a little painstaking work. The slides illustrating the lecture on Iceland's Einar Jonsson, were Dr. Blondal's beautiful brushwork productions in black and white of the artist's statuary.

Born in Edinburg, North Dakota, the son of Bjorn Blondal and his wife, Bjorg Halldorsson, Dr. Blondal moved to Portland, Oregon, with his parents at the

Winnipeg.

He was married to Guðrun Pjetursson, daughter of Stefan Pjetursson and his wife Geirpruður Jonsdottir, of Argyle, Manitoba, on June 2, 1915. Dr. and Mrs. Blondal have four children. Harold is a fourth year student in Medicine. Doris Marjorie, a graduate in Home Economics, now Mrs. George Johnson, has two small daughters. Alvin Theodore, is taking second year pre-medical, and little Jo Ann, at 12, swishes her paint brush with considerable skill.

## *"Keeko"—The Children's Book*

Charles Thorson, well-known Winnipeg artist-cartoonist, has written and illustrated a delightful book. It tells all about Keeko, the little Indian boy and his wonderful adventures in the animal world.

Cantering across the pages are Happy Jack Cottontail, Eddie Eagle and other woodland folk, sometimes pursued by Meany the Cat, who is the villain of the story. Their antics are exquisitely illustrated, the majority of the pictures being large lithographs in gorgeous colors.

In 1934 Mr. Thorson went to Hollywood after working for a number of years as a commercial artist in Winnipeg. He has worked for Walt Disney, and other studios in Hollywood, the M.G.M. Studios in Culver City, Max Fleischer Studios, Miami, Fla., and Terrytoon Studios, New York. While with Disney he helped to create Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, which took three years to make and cost \$3,500,000.

He has created and designed characters for over a hundred motion picture productions, his special work being with the story department of each studio, creating the original characters. The best known of his own creations is that rogue Bugs Bunny, beloved of youthful movie fans.

Besides creating animated characters, Charles Thorson has wroked for publishers in New York, and helped to make an educational film for the U.S. Government, in Chicago.

The idea of writing a children's book about Indians first came to him while working as a fisherman at the northern end of Lake Winnipeg, where they were surrounded by Indians.

In connection with the sale of his book, the T. Eaton Co., Winnipeg, has for the past two weeks had a display of Mr. Thorson's original creations of animated characters.

That "Keeko" is unique in the field of children's books is proven by the fact that Mr. Thorson has received a letter from The International Mark Twain Society, St. Louis, Mo., which reads in part:

"For your contribution to literature, the Executive Committee has voted you the Honorary Membership in the Mark Twain Fellowship". This Society has been called the League of Nations of Literature. It was originally founded for the purpose "of knitting together the whole world in bonds of cultural peace". More than thirty countries are represented in the roll of Honorary Membership, but it does not contain many names, for "Honorary Membership is conferred only upon those who have distinguished themselves in some field of human endeavor."

Charles was born at Gimli, Man., the son of the late Stefan and Sigríður Thorson. His brother, Hon. Joseph Thorson, is president of the Exchequer Court of Canada.

Mr. Thorson is at present in Winnipeg, working on the second book in this series. It is about "Oogie", the little Eskimo. Later there will be a story about "Zookie", the little Zulu.

Keeko was published by the Wilcox & Follett Co., Chicago, and costs \$1.29.

—H. D.

### CORRECTION

In the last issue of the magazine, in the news item about Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Sigvaldason, the bride's name was given as "Svava Palson". This should have read "June Palson".

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## *Jon Olafsson—Western Steel Pioneer*



**JON OLAFSSON**

The first steel produced in Western Canada was poured in the plant of the Manitoba Steel Foundries in the summer of 1916. The man responsible for this outstanding contribution to the industrial development of the West was Jón Olafsson.

Born in Árnessýsla in Iceland on Oct. 11, 1887, Olafsson attended the Flensborg gymnasium, where he became interested in the study of chemistry. After leaving school he went to Scotland and stayed there for two years, finding opportunity for further study of his favorite subject. A year in Iceland followed but in 1913 he left the country for Canada, arriving in Winnipeg in the summer of that year.

In 1914 Olafsson got a job with the Canadian Pacific Railway as a cement inspector at Rogers Pass in British Columbia. This job lasted two years and Olafsson returned to Winnipeg, getting a job as chemist with the Manitoba Steel Foundries in 1916.

The Foundries had up to this time confined its operations to the making of cast iron and it was thought impossible with the equipment available, to attempt the production of steel, which required much higher and better controlled temperatures in the furnaces and much greater knowledge of chemistry and metallurgy. The physical obstacles were gradually surmounted, but the steel was not of very high quality and the new chemist resolved to improve his knowledge of the science of metals. For the next three years he spent all his spare time and most of his earnings taking lessons from a professor of chemistry in Winnipeg. Better knowledge of theory, coupled with daily practical application, enabled Olafsson to produce much better steel and within a year he was not only the firm's chemist but its chief metallurgist as well.

Olafsson left the Manitoba Steel Foundries in 1920 and took a job with a firm of manufacturing chemists. These four years of pioneer steel making had called for the utmost physical and mental effort and a change seemed desirable.

It is likely that Olafsson never felt quite at home away from the big furnaces, in any event he got a position as chief chemist and metallurgist with the Vulcan Iron Works at Winnipeg in June 1923, and, with the exception of two years spent in Scotland, he remained with this firm until he retired in September of this year.

Jón Olafsson came in time to be widely known as a fine craftsman in the field of steel manufacture. His uncanny skill in the making of alloy steel castings won him increasing recognition in the trade and his product came to equal and often greatly surpass the best that others had to offer. This was strikingly confirmed at the ballistic trials on tank armour plate carried out at the Hamilton proving grounds in 1941 and 1942 by the

Department of Munitions and Supply. At these trials his steel castings were found to be superior by a good margin to all others and he was never again during the war years required to submit further samples for testing. Olafsson may justly be proud of the contribution thus made to the safety of those who manned our tanks on the battlefields.

Olafsson's outstanding record in steel has also made him well known in scientific circles and he has contributed papers on various aspects of steel making to publications such as those of the Engineering Institute of Canada and The American Society of Metals. He has also delivered lectures to many scientific, fraternal and cultural organizations both in Canada and in Scotland.

Single minded devotion to his craft kept Olafsson from taking as active a part in public and community affairs as he would have wished to take. In his few moments of leisure he turned to golf and chess for relaxation. He has kept himself well informed on the major issues of the day and is well acquainted with the history and literature of his race, whose honor he has constantly defended and upheld in his contacts with others.

Olafsson is tall in stature and powerfully built as befits those who tend the fires in Vulcan's forge. He is fearless and outspoken, independent in thought and action, not given to compromise and an exacting taskmaster when occasion demands. In moments of leisure he is a genial host and fond of good company and good cheer.

During some thirty active years, Jón Olafsson produced more than 20,000 heats of steel. Some slight acquaintance with the methods of steel manufacture is necessary to appreciate the magnitude of this task.

There is no substitute for iron and modern industrial civilization could not exist without it. It may be roughly classified into three major groups according to its carbon content. These groups are: (1) Wrought iron (carbon

0.30% or less), very soft and malleable. (2) Steel (carbon 0.30 to 2.20%), malleable but capable of extreme hardness when suddenly cooled. This is known as tempering. (3) Cast iron (carbon 2.30 to 3 or 4%), very hard and brittle and not usefully malleable at any temperature. Of these three groups steel is by far the most important and by itself or mixed with alloys, serves countless purposes where the combined qualities of hardness, toughness and durability are required.

Turning iron into steel used to be a slow and expensive process and the beginnings of the modern age of machinery may be said to date from the period 1856 to 1860, when the Bessemer and open hearth processes were invented. These processes made it possible to produce good steel cheaply and in great quantities from the raw iron ore. The great bulk of general purpose steel is still made by the open hearth process but where high quality carbon or alloy steel is required other methods must be used.

Western Canada produces no steel by the direct process due to lack of workable iron ore deposits. All steel, whether for casting or rolling, is therefore made by smelting scrap iron.

There are various types of furnaces for the melting of steel, but the type which Olafsson used most was an electric furnace of the arc type rated at 1½ tons per hour and having a capacity of 4½ to 5 tons. This furnace is a barrel-shaped steel monster mounted on axles and lined with silica brick. The charge is scrap iron containing as nearly as possible the properties of the casting to be made. In this case our casting is a steel alloy casting.

This scrap is thrown into the furnace where it is gradually melted at temperatures ranging up to 3,200° F. A small sample is then taken for testing in the laboratory. These tests determine among other things, the all important carbon content. This being ascertained and altered if required, the necessary

amount of alloy is computed and added to the charge. This phase of the operation calls for the greatest care. A fraction of 1% of alloy addition may change the physical properties of the steel to the extent that it will not fulfill the specifications. This is particularly true in the case of carbon.

The heat is now ready for pouring. The current is switched off, the furnace tilted on its axis and the charge poured through a small spout into a preheated ladle. From there the metal is transferred into smaller ladles and poured into the moulds. The moulds are made of sand and clay and contain a hollow centre whose contours match those of the casting being made, and openings for pouring the metal which at this high temperature runs almost as freely as water.

This operation has taken from 2½ to 3 hours. During all this time constant watch must be kept on the temperature gauges, accurate tests have to be made and just the right amount of alloy added to the steel. In spite of all precautions something may go wrong. If the castings fail to meet specification they will only

be good for scrap to be remelted some other day. If they are sound they may go to South Africa to be used for the dry grinding of gold ores, or they may go to Northern Manitoba to provide the jaws for a giant rock crusher. The quality of this particular heat will not be known for several days, however. A specimen bar is taken from each heat. This will be machined to a standardized shape and sent to the University of Manitoba for testing. There it is placed in a special machine and pulled until it breaks. This test will finally determine the quality of the steel.

Jon Olafsson was married in Winnipeg in 1919, to Margaret Gordon, whom he met while in Scotland. They have one son, Patrick Gordon, who is now doing post graduate work in Science at the University of Manitoba. His picture was in the June issue of the Icelandic Canadian.

When he retired from the steel industry, Olafsson moved to Salmon Arm, B. C., to manage a large fruit farm which he bought there some years ago. Manitoba has lost a great pioneer.

H. Th.

## *Mr. Justice H. A. Bergman Honored*

Mr. Justice Hjalmar A. Bergman is one of four Winnipeg citizens upon whom the University of Manitoba chose, this year, to confer the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. Through the years, candidates for this distinction have been selected with meticulous care from the ranks of Manitobans whose services to the community or to the country have merited outstanding recognition. It is therefore a rare honor that has been bestowed on Mr. Bergman.

Both the Winnipeg dailies commented editorially on the event. After describing Mr. Bergman as one of the best legal minds in Canada, the Winnipeg Free Press goes on to say:

"But he has other claims. Those who have followed the history of the university will remember how, as member and vice-chairman of the board of governors, he took a leading part in the solution of difficult and sometimes painful problems during the "thirties". As a resolver of legal tangles he was superb. Then, and later as chairman of the board, he displayed a conscientiousness unexcelled in public service. The art of compromise was one in which he was not adept, but that defect apart—and even this was not always a defect—his contribution to the university was a magnificent one".

## OUR WAR EFFORT



P.F.C. L. C. Gudmundson



T5 T. S. Gudmundson



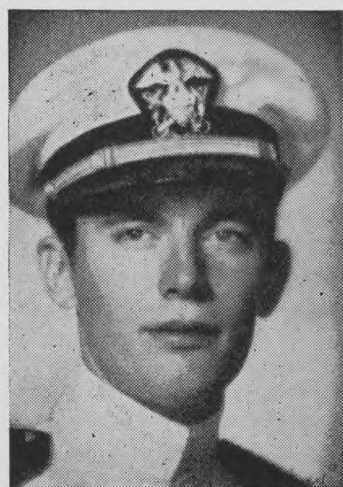
A.S. K. F. Gudmundson

**P.F.C. LAWRENCE C. GUDMUNDSON**—Born March 18, 1912. Joined the U.S. Army Nov. 18, 1942. He served with the Signal Corps at Camp Crowder, Mo., and Langley Field, Va. Also in Iceland 18 months. Discharged Oct. 1945.

**T5 THORARIN S. GUDMUNDSON**—Born Feb. 24, 1907. Joined the U. S. Army March 26, 1942. Was stationed at Camp Roberts, Calif., for basic training. He was at Camp Cook, Calif., Camp Barnie and Camp Hood, Texas.

**A.S. KRISTINN F. GUDMUNDSON**—Born Jan. 4, 1920. Joined the U.S. Navy Apr. 7, 1942. He was stationed at San Diego, Calif. Discharged May, 1942.

**SONS OF MRS. GUDRUN (THORGRIMSON) GUDMUNDSON AND THE LATE G. GUDMUNDSON, MOUNTAIN, N. D.**



Ens. R. N. Ottenson

### ENS. RONALD NICHOLAS OTTENSON

★

Born at Los Angeles, Calif., November 12, 1925. Was a cadet in the U. S. Navy and received a commission as ensign at the University of Texas. He is now on reserve enrolled at the U.S.C.

Son of Guðmundur Louis and Evelyn (Christian) Ottenson, Los Angeles, Calif.

Grandson of Nikulás and Anna (Guðmundsdóttir) Ottenson, Winnipeg, Man.

★





A.S. H. S. (George) Johnson



Pte. John Johnson



Tpr. Ingimar Johnson



Sgt. Egill Johnson

**ABLE SEAMAN HALLGRIMUR SVEINBJÖRN (GEORGE) JOHNSON**—Born Apr. 21, 1924 in Plato, Sask. Joined the R.C.N.V.R. July 1943. Served in North and South Pacific, North and South Atlantic, Caribbean Sea and Indian Ocean. Discharged in Calgary, Dec. 1945.

**PTE. JOHN JOHNSON**—Born Feb. 12, 1917 in Iceland. Joined the R.C.A.F. 1943 at Saskatoon, Sask. Took pilot's training in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Later transferred to army. Discharged in Vancouver, B. C., Dec. 1945.

**TPR. INGIMAR JOHNSON**—Born March 15, 1923 in Humboldt, Sask. Enlisted in the Canadian Army July 1943. Went overseas March 1944. Served with the 1st Div. in Holland, Belgium and with the occupational army in Germany. Discharged in Vancouver, July, 1946.

**SGT. EGILL JOHNSON**—Born Nov. 19, 1919 in Iceland. Enlisted in the Canadian Army March 1940. Went overseas 1943. Discharged in Vancouver, B. C., 1946.

**SONS OF EGILL AND RANNVEIG JOHNSON, WARMAN, SASK.**



Lieut. G. P. Ingaldson

A.S. T. N. Ingaldson

P.O. C. V. Ingaldson

**LIEUT. GORDON PAULSON INGALDSON**—Born Dec. 10, 1917 at Arborg, Man. Enlisted June, 1941, with the 12th Dragoons which later merged with the 18th Man. Rcsse. Trained at Winnipeg, Man., Borden, Ont., and received his commission at Brockville, Ont. Embarked overseas Oct. 1943. In May 1944 he went to Italy. Saw action in Italy, Holland and Germany.

**ABLE SEAMAN TRYGGVI NORMAN INGALDSON**—Born Apr. 3, 1914 at Winnipeg, Man. Enlisted in R.C.N.V.R. Aug. 1942. Trained in Winnipeg and on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. In Jan. 1944 he went overseas on the frigate Grou, which convoyed the North Sea to Murmansk, Russia. After V.E. Day he signed up for Pacific duty and was stationed at Halifax when hostilities ceased.

**P.O. CHRISTIAN VILHELM INGALDSON**—Born Apr. 3, 1914 at Winnipeg, Man. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Aug. 1943. He trained in Winnipeg, Paulson, Man., Yorkton, Sask., and Edmonton, Alta. He received his wings at Rivers, Man., Dec. 1944.

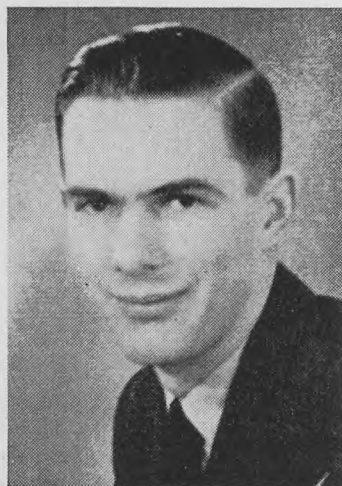
**SON AND TWIN SONS OF MRS. INGALDSON AND THE LATE  
MR. INGIMAR INGALDSON, WINNIPEG, MAN.**

#### FLT. LIEUT. PETER B. KEY



Born at Markerville, Alberta, September 5, 1923. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. March 16, 1942. Trained as navigator and received his wings and commission April 15, 1943. Embarked overseas June 1943. Was attached to R.A.F. Squadron of South East Asia Air Forces in India. Took part in the major Burma drive. Returned to England to fly transports on occupational duty. Returned to Canada April 1946. Discharged June 1946.

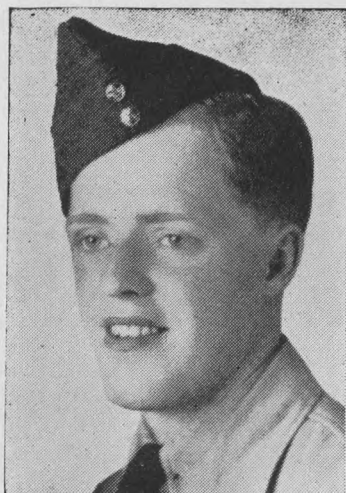
Son of Joseph B. and Guðbjörg (Björnson) Key, Fawcett, Alta.



Flt.-Lieut. Peter B. Key



L./Sgt. John H. Dick



L.A.C. Fred Ruppel

**L.-SGT. JOHN H. DICK**—Born at Winnipeg, Man. Joined the R.C.A. of the Canadian Army May 24, 1943. Trained at Brandon and Shilo, Man. Embarked overseas July 1944, and was stationed at No. 1 C.A.R.U. Borden, Surrey, England. Transferred to the Can. Infantry Corps, Hemsly, Yorkshire, Eng. Landed at Dieppe, France Nov. 2, 1944. Went to No. 2 Can. Base Reinforcement Group at Ghent, Belgium. Wounded at Appingdam, Northern Holland, Apr. 22, 1945. Returned on hospital ship "Letitia" and discharged Sept. 12, 1945.

**Son of Mr. J. and Gertrude (Magnússon) Dick, Norwood, Man.**

**L.A.C. FRED RUPPEL**—Born at Winnipeg, Man. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Jan. 1942. Studied radar at McGill University, Montreal and the R.A.F. station at Clinton, B. C. Posted from there to Vancouver, B. C., where he was discharged Aug. 1945.

**Son of Mr. F. and Mrs. Hildur (Magnusson) Ruppel, Winnipeg, Man.**

**GRANDSONS OF THE LATE MAGNUS MAGNUSSON**



Sgt. Lára S. Kristjanson

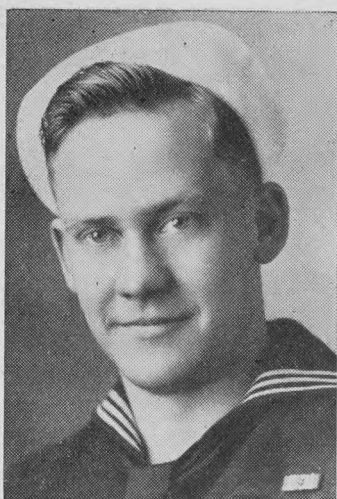
### SGT. LÁRA S. KRISTJÁNSON

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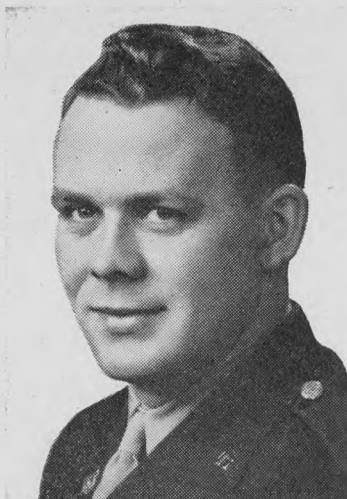
Born at Mountain, N. D., December 29, 1925. Joined the U. S. A. Women's Army Corps March 28, 1945. Took 3 months basic training at Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. She served on the clerical staff at Bushnell General Hospital, Brigham City, Utah and Fitzsimmons General Hospital, Denver, Col. Discharged October 19, 1946.

Daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Sigurbjörn Kristjanson, Mountain, N. D.

★



S.K.D. 1/c A. T. Christianson



C.W.O. J. V. Christianson

**S.K.D. 1/c ALLAN THEODORE CHRISTIANSON**—Born near Mountain, N. D., July 30, 1922. Enlisted in U.S.N.R. Sept. 21, 1942. Received boat training at Great Lakes, Ill., and specialized training as storekeeper at the U. S. Naval Training School, Bloomington, Ind. Served at Bizerte, Tunisia, North-West Africa for 21 months. Discharged Jan. 4, 1946.

**C.W.O. JONAS VILMAR CHRISTIANSON**—Born near Mountain, N. D., Oct. 31, 1914. Inducted into U.S. Army Aug. 15, 1942. Embarked overseas Sept. 29, 1942. Served with Transportation Corps at Skagway, Alaska, until Dec. 1944. Returned to U.S.A. and served Stateside until June 1945. Again embarked for overseas service June 1945. Served in Okinawa from Aug. 1945 until Apr. 1946. Disch. Apr. 8, '46.

**SONS OF MR. GUÐMUNDUR A. AND MRS. GUÐLAUG (JONASSON)  
CHRISTIANSON, MOUNTAIN, N. D.**

### PTE. ALBERT BERGTHORSON

★

Born at Lundar, Man. Enlisted in the Canadian Army March 26, 1943. Served with the Perth Regiment in Canada, United Kingdom, Central Mediterranean area and Continental Europe. He received the following stars: 1939-1945 Star, Italy Star, France and Germany Star, C.V.S.M. and Clasp. Discharged March 12, 1946.

Son of John and Petrina Bergthorson, Lundar, Man.

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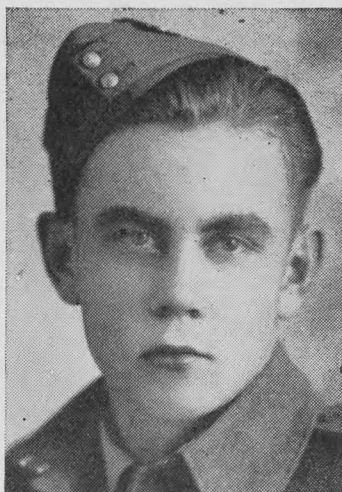


Pte. Albert Bergthorson





**Cpl. G. H. Vigfusson**



**Pte. Hjalmar Vigfusson**

**CPL. GUDJON HERBERT VIGFUSSON**—Born at Oakview, Man., May 11, 1923. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. as A.F.M. Nov. 1942. Trained at Winnipeg, Man., St. Thomas, and Toronto, Ont. Stationed at Souris, Gimli, Man., and Edmonton, Alta. Discharged March 30, 1946.

**PTE. HJALMAR VIGFUSSON**—Born at Oakview, Man., May 29, 1926. Enlisted in the Canadian Army Jan. 1945. Trained at Fort Garry, Man. Stationed in Winnipeg until his discharge, April 10, 1946.

**SONS OF MR. & MRS. EIRIKUR VIGFUSSON, SELKIRK, MAN.**



**Sgt. Soffanias Lindal**



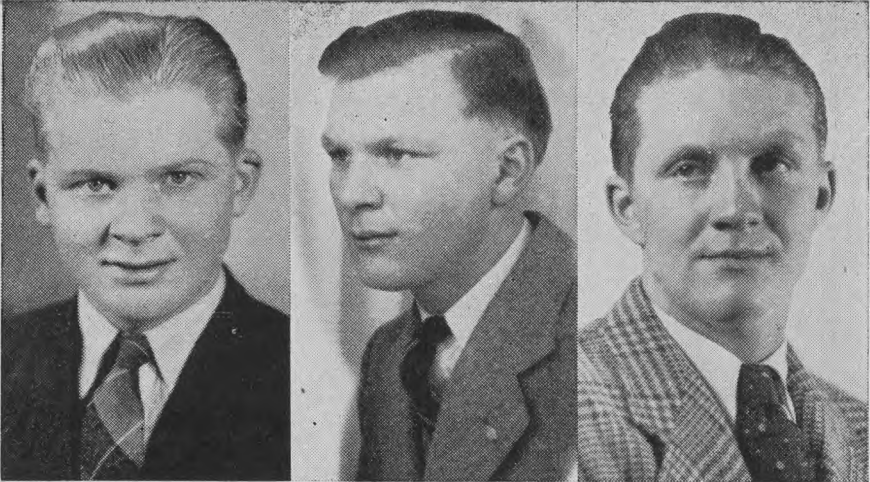
**A.S. B. V. Lindal**

**SGT. SOFFANIAS LINDAL**—Born at Langruth, Man., Oct. 1918. Enlisted in R.C.C. Jan. 8, 1942. Served in camps across Canada as instructor. Disch. Dec. 20, 1945.

**ABLE SEAMAN BJÖRN VALTÝR LINDAL**—Born at Langruth, Man., Aug. 31, 1915. Enlisted in R.C.N.V.R. Sept. 17, 1941. Served on Pacific and Atlantic Convoy and patrol duties. Discharged Dec. 10, 1945.

**SONS OF CARL FRANKLIN AND HOLMFRIDUR JULIANA LINDAL, LANGRUTH, MAN.**

## Seven Jonathan Brothers



**Pvt. O. W. Jonathan    Elec. M. 3/c D. V. Jonathan    Pvt. R. W. Jonathan**

**PVT. OTTO WAYNE JONATHAN**—Born at Arco, Minn., Nov. 8, 1924. Enlisted in Minnesota State Guard. Discharged Nov. 1943, when they disbanded.

**ELEC. MATE 3/c DONALD VERNON JONATHAN**—Born at Arco, Minn., Dec. 9, 1925. Enlisted in the U.S. Navy June 15, 1943. Received his boat training at Farragut, Idaho and Bremerton, Wash. Early in 1944 he was sent to Pearl Harbor. Served on the U.S.S.P.C. 572 in the Marianas, Marshall, Caroline and other Pacific Islands. Discharged April 1946.

**PVT. RALPH WARREN JONATHAN**—Born at Arco, Minn., May 2, 1927. Enlisted June 1, 1946. Was at Camp Knox, Ky., for 3 mos. Then went to Ft. Lawton, Wash. Early in Oct. 1946 he went to Korea and is there at the present time.

### In Memoriam



#### **SGT. ALLAN HAROLD JONATHAN**

Born at Arco, Minn., Nov. 28, 1917. Joined the service Dec. 26, 1942 at Los Angeles, Calif. Trained at Camp Howse, Texas, Camp Claiborne, La., and Shreveport, La. Went overseas Oct. 1944. He was a member of the 335th Infantry Reg't of the 84th Div. He was killed in action on the western front in Germany, Nov. 29, 1944. He received the Good Conduct Medal and the Expert Infantryman Badge.



**Sgt. Allan Harold Jonathan**



Virgil Jonathan      Elec. M. 1/c E. H. Jonathan      2nd Lieut R. B. Jonathan

**VIRGIL JONATHAN**—Born at Minneota, Minn., Apr. 30, 1906. Joined the Counter Intelligence Corps, Military Intelligence Div., June 16, 1941 and was special agent. He was stationed at Ft. Roberts, Calif., Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., and Washington, D. C. Later stationed in Reykjavik, Iceland 1 year, England and Wales 11 mos., France 4 mos., and Germany 4 mos. He was in the Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland and Central European campaigns.

**ELEC. MATE 1/c ERWIN H. JONATHAN**—Born at Minneota, Minn., Aug. 3, 1914. Enlisted in the Sea Bees July, 1942. Was sent to N. Africa in the fall of 1942 and stationed there until his return to U.S.A. in June 1944. Volunteered for special duty in the Pacific U.S.N.R. and trained at Hueneme, Calif. In Nov. 1944 he was sent to Saipan, Marianas Islands. Returned Dec. 1945. Discharged Dec. 8, 1945.

**2nd LIEUT. ROBERT BOYD JONATHAN**—Born at Arco, Minn., Aug. 25, 1921. Enlisted July 1943. Trained at Miami Beach, Fla., Milwaukee, Wis., Merced, Santa Ana, Calif. and Marfa, Texas. Graduated as 2nd Lieut. at Marfa Feb. 2, 1945. Stationed at Las Vegas, Nev. Discharged at Sioux City, Iowa, Nov. 1945.

**SONS OF JORUN S. AND JOHN H. JONATHAN, MINNEOTA, MINN.**



Pte. Olafur Thorsteinson

#### PTE. OLAFUR THORSTEINSON

★

Born August 11, 1897. Inducted into U. S. Army at Fort Snelling, Minn., Sept. 4, 1942. Took basic training at Camp Wolters, Texas and later transferred to Camp Maxey, Texas to 666 Ordinance Ammunition Co. Was on Louisiana manoeuvres fall of 1943. Went overseas Feb. 26, 1944. Served in England, Belgium and Germany with American first army. Awarded five battle stars: Normandy Invasion, Northern France, Ardennes or Belgian Breakton, Rhineland and Central Europe. Served 18 months in U.S.A. and 20 months overseas.

Son of Guðrún Jóhannson and Konrad Thorsteinson, Mountain, N. D.

## *Modern Cinderella*

Most young people have dreams of adventure. Such a dream came true for pretty sixteen year-old Betty White of 1288 Dominion St., Winnipeg, when on Monday, November 10th, she received by Air-mail, an invitation to a Royal party at St. James' Palace to be held Nov., 18th., by their Majesties King George and Queen Elizabeth for their daughter, Princess Elizabeth and Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten, whose wedding will take place November 20th.

Betty had read in a news item that the Princess was having difficulty in obtaining nylon hose for her trousseau, so last August Betty used her little hoard of savings to buy the best nylons to be had and sent them with her good wishes to the Princess. She felt more than repaid when a gracious letter of thanks arrived from the Princess' Lady-in-waiting.

But an invitation to the Royal party! Her friends and family were overwhelmed. And almost as thrilled as Betty herself were her class-mates at Daniel McIntyre Collegiate, where she is a student in grade XII. "Can you go? You must go, Betty". Of course she could not go! But it was so lovely to have been invited, and Betty tried valiantly to be reconciled and turn her thoughts once more to her studies.

But, unexpectedly, Good Fairies sprang upon the scene. The Winnipeg Free Press decided to sponsor her trip to London, England. A magic wand was waved, and various pre-trip arrangements dissolved as if into thin air. Papers and pass-ports came marching miraculously into line. The T. Eaton Co., Ltd. generously winked an eye and in a flash our Cinderella was transformed into a dream-damsel, arrayed in glamorous fashions and completely outfitted for the trip.

After being interviewed on the radio and receiving a token of good-will from Mayor Coulter, our little heroine, who



**BETTY WHITE**

never lost her poise and charmingly took all this excitement in her stride, stepped on the plane, Saturday morning, November 15, laden with gifts from friends and school-mates, and flew out into the dawn to meet this great adventure.

"It was just like a fairy tale", said Betty's mother, Mrs. G. P. White, when interviewed. "I was not much older than Betty, only seventeen when I launched forth in 1910, on an uncertain adventure, left my native land, Iceland, and came to Canada seeking education and advancement." Mrs. White was Sigríður (Sigurdson), daughter of Sigurður Jónsson and his wife Rebecca Jónsdóttir, from Eyjafjörður, Iceland. After coming to Canada she trained for the nursing profession in Winnipeg and New York. In 1916 she married George Preston White, and after his return from the First World War settled on his farm at Snowflake, Manitoba. Six years ago the Whites moved to Winnipeg so as to afford their seven children better educational facilities.

The joyous adventure of Betty White will be long remembered by her family and friends.



## *Cultural Work*

During the last two months Mrs. H. F. Danielson, who last summer was appointed to organize and assist cultural efforts among the various chapters of the Icelandic National League, has been working with the chapters in the Inter-lake district. From the prompt and enthusiastic response to this worthy project of the League it is evident that thinking people of Icelandic descent realize the value and necessity of such cultural contacts.

In our Canadian cities and towns there are numerous small organizations such as the Burn's Society, the Browning Society, and the Dickens Fellowship, which have as their aim to enrich themselves and their communities by the diligent study of these great literary figures. Similarly, Icelandic Canadians and Americans can feel assured that they are contributing to the culture of their country by coming together in groups, no matter how small, to read and discuss the great gems of our own literary heritage, which is recognized and lauded by world leaders in the field of Education and culture.

Through this leadership of the National League, four large Icelandic schools are now functioning, where the children are taught to read and speak Icelandic, are given competent direction in choral work and Icelandic spoken poetry and are told interesting stories about Iceland.

As adults also have evinced such an interest in furthering their knowledge of Icelandic, several study groups have been organized. The largest of these is at Riverton, Man., where the members meet twice a month to study and discuss the history and literature of Iceland, and use as source material, the book *Iceland's Thousand Years*. In addition they read Icelandic texts on the subjects discussed. Riverton also has the largest Icelandic school, so far, there being over a hundred children enrolled. The Lundar school counts 75 children, and over 70 will be enrolled at Gimli where the school is just being organized.

The Arborg chapter of the League has decided to concentrate its efforts this year on producing an Icelandic play and to further organize dramatic activities among the younger people, thus affording them a chance to practice using the language and at the same time receiving training in a pleasant and constructive type of group activity.

Rev. P. M. Pétursson, vice president of the League and Mrs. Danielson have travelled to Riverton and Gimli showing an interesting Icelandic film, together with the National Film Board picture, *Iceland on the Prairies*, to large audiences of children and adults.

During the next month Mrs. Danielson will visit other chapters of the League to assist them in doing cultural work along other lines.

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### **Enterprising**

Lloyd R. Sigurdson, formerly of Arborg, Man., on his discharge from the R.C.N.V.R. in December, 1945, decided to go into the publishing business. So in April 1946 he started working for the *Carberry News-Express*, then edited by W. H. Vopni. Just a year later, or in June 1947, he bought the *Post*, a weekly newspaper, which is published at New-

dale, Man. and serves the surrounding town and counties. Lloyd, who reached his twenty-second birthday last October, is now publisher and editor of this six-page weekly, which bears the full title of "*The Blanchard-Harrison-Strathclair Post*". In December 1945, Lloyd was married to Joyce Chant of Erinview, Manitoba.

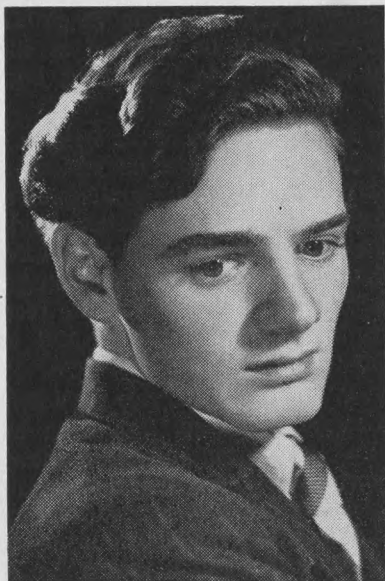
## In The News

### Awards

Betty Jane McKenty was awarded the Isbister Scholarship in Arts and Anepa Scholarship in Greek. Betty Jane is the daughter of Dr. Jack McKenty, of Winnipeg and his wife, the former Inga Tergeson of Gimli. Her grandparents, Pjetur and Sigridur Tergeson, of Gimli, are well known to many Winnipeg Icelanders.

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### C. B. C. Actor



**Thorhallur Arngrimson**

Thorhallur Arngrimson recently passed through Winnipeg on his way from Vancouver to Toronto where he expects to work with the Canadian Broadcasting Drama Department, and hopes to do some work on the professional stage.

After studying for two years at the B. C. Music and Drama Institute he got a position with the CBC Vancouver studios. He has also taken part in productions of the Vancouver Little Theatre, been student-actor with the Lambert-Smith Players; and last summer was a mem-

ber of the Island Theatre Summer Stock Co., which originated in Vancouver.

Thor Arngrim, as he calls himself professionally, has been commended by producers and directors for his acting ability, and also has some experience in stage management.

Thor was born at Regina, Sask., resided for some time in Mozart, and moved to B. C. about three years ago. His parents are Stefan and Margret Arngrimson, Vancouver, B. C.

★

Frederick Carl Kristjanson, B.Sc., has left for Minneapolis, Minn., where he will assume his duties as an Assistant in the Research department of the University of Minnesota.

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### Western Canada scores in Butter contest

Western Canada swept the field at the Royal Winter Fair's butter judging, held in Toronto in November, winning 44 first, second and third prizes, as compared to 15 for Ontario and Quebec.

Champion ribbon was given to the Bashaw Creamery and Milling Co. Ltd., Bashaw, Alta. The company's samples were awarded 97.3 points.

Reserve champion was Leo Magnusson, owner and manager of Treherne Creamery, Treherne, Manitoba, with 97.2 points.

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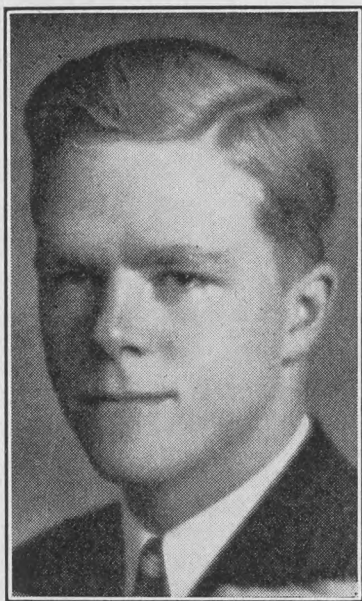
A significant step was taken in the growth of the Icelandic Republic, when Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, Premier of Canada, announced over CBC recently that diplomatic relations with Iceland were established. Mr. King further announced that the Hon. Thor Thors, Minister of Iceland to the United States had been appointed to act as the First Icelandic Minister to Canada, and would act as the Icelandic Diplomatic Representative to both Canada and the United States.

The Canadian Minister to Iceland has not been named as yet.

Dr. Richard Beck, professor of Norse languages and Literature at the State University of North Dakota, has recently been elected as Associate Editor of the quarterly *Scandinavian Studies*, which is published for the advancement of Scandinavian study.

Dr. Beck has written numerous articles on Icelandic and Norwegian literature, in this magazine, in the February issue of this year a Review on Prof. Halldor Hermannson's *Islandica Collection*. Dr. Beck has been on the executive of the above mentioned society, and holds the office of Past President.

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**Thor E. Stephenson, B.A. Sc., M.Sc.**

Thor E. Stephenson was born in Winnipeg Nov. 7, 1919. He is the son of the late Fredrick Stephenson and his wife Anna Stephenson.

This young man has had a remarkable career in Science.

At the age of 13 he went to the high school at Pickering College, Newmarket, Ontario. At the conclusion of his course there, 4 years later, he was granted the Garrott cane. This is given to the stud-

ent who excells in all subjects studied during the course. He was also granted the Cummer scholarship, which amounts to \$5,000.00 for continued study at the University of Toronto.

From Pickering he went to the University of Toronto, and he specialized in Engineering physics, and was granted the degree of B.A. Sc. (Honours).

After graduation from the University of Toronto, he was made Assistant Research Engineer with the Flight Research Section—Division of Mechanical Engineering, National Research Council at Ottawa. He was with the Research Council until the fall of 1946—when he went to the California Institute of Technology. From there he graduated with honors, and was granted the degree of M.Sc. in Aeronautical Engineering, in the spring of 1947.

He is now back with the Research Council and is located at Arnprior, Ont.

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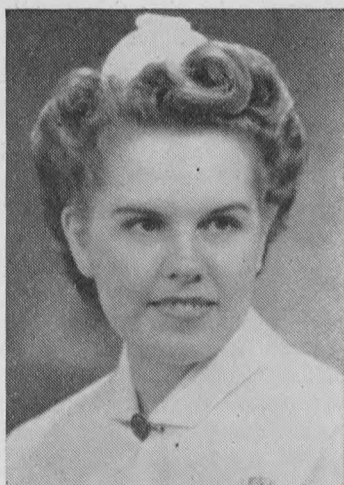
On the occasion of his 80th birthday, Gudjon Solberg Fridriksson, of Selkirk, received congratulations by telegram from his nieces in Iceland. Mr. Fridriksson came to Canada in 1911, and after two years residence in Winnipeg, moved to Selkirk. He served in England and France with the 108th Battalion during the first Great War, returning home after the Armistice in 1918. Eight years ago he married Miss Lena Holm, nine years his junior.

★

Allan A. Beck was recently awarded the Jon Sigurdson Chapter, I.O.D.E., Music Scholarship of \$50.00 for Violin. Earlier in the summer he received the Junior Musical Club Scholarship. Allan was a guest artist on CKY recently. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Th. Beck of Winnipeg.

★

Miss Viola Sigurdson, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Skapti Sigurdson, Oak View, Man., was granted a \$40.00 scholarship in the Grade 10 Correspondence Course, last summer.



**Eleanor G. H. Sigurdson**

Eleanor G. H. Sigurdson, born at Winnipeg 1924. Graduated from the Winnipeg General Hospital 1945. Is spending the next year taking post graduate courses in obstetrics in Jersey City, and later she will take up Gynecology in New York City.

She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Sigurdson of Winnipeg.



#### **Further Honors for Frank**

Frank Thorolfson, well known in Winnipeg musical circles, who is now studying musicology at the Chicago College of Music, has been appointed associate conductor for the Bach Choir of Chicago. The choir's first concert of the season will be in December at Fullerton Hall, Chicago. Mr. Thorolfson will have the honor of conducting a portion of the program. Dr. Rosenwald, Dean of the Chicago College of Music, is the conductor.

Conrad Neuger, director of the opera, has arranged for Mr. Thorolfson to work with him in the preparation of opera for the college and also to attend rehearsals of visiting opera companies, with a view to sending him to various points throughout the country where opera direction is needed. He has also been

invited to become associate conductor of the Chicago Ladies' Symphony.

Frank is studying at the Chicago College on the Oliver Ditson Scholarship, of \$1,000, granted to students of outstanding ability. Along with his arduous studies and activities in the musical field he is doing part time work, to help defray his expenses while taking the course, as the scholarship will be used for tuition only.



#### **Wins Diamond Medal**

Helen Ingimundson, was born at Lunda, Man., where she received her primary education. Her high school years were spent at the General Wolfe and Daniel McIntyre Inst., where she graduated with very good standing. Helen took her business training at the Success Commercial College, graduating with high honors, and was awarded the Diamond Medal for Speed Typing (80 words per minute). She is now employed as private secretary with the United Grain Growers in Winnipeg. Helen's parents are Lawrence and Jakobina Ingimundson of Winnipeg.



#### **Young Pianist**

8 years old, Þorunn Johannsdóttir of Reykjavík, Iceland, held two piano recitals in England, where she spent last year studying music, and was by far the youngest pupil attending that college of Music, where she studied, and at her two Piano Recitals the critics gave her warm praise.

She is at present in Reykjavík, Iceland, where she will give a recital, and her repertoire will comprise the works of the great masters, and two small compositions of her own. She will be leaving for England with her father Jóhannes Tryggvason, to continue her musical education.



Miss Helen Dorothy Sigurdson, won the Isbister scholarship seconds, for Grade 11. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Sigurdson, Riverton, Man.



**Scholarship Winner****David Daniel Kristmanson**

is the British Columbia winner of a \$2,000 scholarship, offered by the Imperial Oil Ltd. He plans to take an engineering course at the University of British Columbia. Ten scholarships, each valued at \$2,000, were posted in Canada and Newfoundland for sons of employees. His father is Daniel Kristmanson, Imperial agent at Prince Rupert.

David, who was born in Vancouver and educated at Prince Rupert, is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Friðrik Kristmanson (one of the pioneers of the Shoal Lake settlement) of Osland, B. C., and also grandson of Mrs. Thorbjorg Anderson of Vancouver.

Mrs. Margret Olafson, of Selkirk, celebrated her 95th birthday on October 21st of this year. Her husband is one jump ahead of her. He completed his 96th year on April 26th. The couple have tagged along through life together for 65 years, having been married in Iceland May 25th, 1882. They came to Canada in 1884, settling in the Arnes district. In 1890 they moved to Selkirk, where they still reside.

★

It was recently announced that G. L. Johannson, the Icelandic-Danish consul for the Prairie provinces, has been awarded the King Christian X Liberty Medal in recognition of his service to Denmark during the war years. Receiving the medal were also 8 Danish-Canadians of Winnipeg, among them being H. A. Brodahl, well known to Icelanders for his work in the Viking Club.

★

**Carol Eyford Wins Scholarship**

Carol Eyford graduated from Grade XI at the Piney High School in June 1947, and was awarded the Manitoba Scholarship in Home Economics for two years, to the amount of \$325.00 each year. — Throughout high school Carol has maintained a high standard in her studies, with consistently high marks. Carol is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Skafti V. Eyford of Piney, Man. She is attending the University of Manitoba.

## ***The Icelandic Canadian***

**Published Quarterly by the Icelandic Canadian Club  
of Winnipeg, Man.**

**Subscription Rates for North America: One year \$1.00 — Two  
years \$1.75 — Three years \$2.25 — Payable in advance.  
BACK NUMBERS AVAILABLE.**

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## Music Collection

At the first Fall meeting of the Icelandic Canadian Club, Prof. Skuli Johnsson gave a lecture on "Laxdæla".

W. Kristjanson gave an outline of the plans for the reading group of the Evening School. During the coming season the members will read, in Icelandic, selections from the works of modern Icelandic prose writers and poets, including several Icelandic Canadian writers.

Mrs. Louise Gudmunds gave the report of the committee in charge of collecting original musical compositions.

Owing to the wide-spread response to this project, she said, the work will take many months. Scores of letters of encouragement have been received and a large number of compositions. The well known musician and composer, S. K. Hall, has shown a fine understanding and enthusiasm for this work and has written the committee many letters, giving valuable information about outstanding music students scattered far and wide on this continent.

As was pointed out in the beginning, she said, the purpose or expectation in regard to this project was not that of putting out a publication of spectacular compositions. Although several fine works have been received, the masterpieces will, we hope be written in the future.

But it is wise and valuable not to ignore efforts that have been made, perhaps under adverse circumstances, because they are not comparable to the Masters. For instance, it would have been a great misfortune had not the works of the Icelandic composers, Helgi and Jonas Helgason, been preserved. Their efforts were elementary and could not be classed with the great Masters of other nations of that time. Yet they were of much significance to the Icelandic nation, and became an incentive and a challenge to later musicians whose efforts are now blossoming forth and will some day, perhaps, reach consummate skill.

It is of interest to note from the biographies of the Helgason brothers that one was a blacksmith and the other a carpenter.

In view of these facts, said Mrs. Gudmunds, we feel confident that the collecting and preserving of musical efforts of the past has a profound bearing on musical endeavors in the future.

### TALKING BOOKS

The Ontario School for the Blind, at Brantford, has a library of talking books. They are actually phonograph records of classic and current literature. Walt Disney's "Bambi" delights the little ones, while older boys thrill to the spirit of Robert Service and Jack London. Some short shorts are contained in a single record, but it takes 169 records to cover their longest book, the Bible. Among the 150 volumes in this library of talking books is "The Good Shepherd" by Gunnar Gunnarsson, famous Icelandic author.

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## *Shoal Lake Sketches*

(Continued from page 9)

went to Nova Scotia, wintered there, and then returned to Iceland for his family. He returned with the large group in 1876, and settled on Big Island. He was an inventor, skilled at making things, and built a windmill to grind his wheat. He acquired a steam engine to saw lumber, and cut fire wood, and he supplied his barn with running water, automatically controlled by a device which he called the "cow telegraph". He was repeatedly member of the local council in the days of the New Iceland Republic. Petur Bjarnason arrived in Canada 1876, settled in Big Island, and in Isafold. He was member of the local council, district reeve, secretary-treasurer for school districts, and postmaster, and was one of the prime movers in the organization of the two school districts on Big Island. Prominent, also, were the father and son, Jon Jonsson and Jon H. Johnson. The family came to Big Island in 1878. In 1893, Jon H. Johnson, in company with Stefan and Kjartan Johnson, built the second Icelandic owned steamer on Lake Winnipeg.

This was virtually the close of the period of settlement, although a few were yet to come, from Iceland, North Dakota, Winnipeg and elsewhere.

The settlement had now assumed its permanent form, about ten miles wide and six miles deep at the top with narrow fringes bordering on the lake to the south, about fifteen miles long on the west side and ten miles on the east side.

### LIVELIHOOD

Cattle raising was the settlers' mainstay. Sigurður Eyjólfson had about one hundred, but very few approximated to that number. Many kept sheep. Magnus Kristjanson had at one time a flock of about a hundred, including several pure-bred Oxford Downs.

The country, although fertile in part,

was in many places stony, and the surface soil thin, and it was not suited to grain-growing. Fifteen years after the first settlement, few had more than 10-15 acres broken. Jon Rafnkelson had about fifty acres under cultivation. Oats and barley were the chief crops, for home consumption.

For many years, there was no threshing machine in the district and the sheaves were fed into the manger. About 1909, a small group of farmers combined to purchase a separator. James Cobb, from Seamo, was the engineer, and Valdimar Eirikson, one of the North Dakota settlers (1903), operated the separator. About 1913, Magnus Kristjanson bought a small gasoline engine and a grain crusher, which for a time served many in the Otto and Lillesve districts. Shortly, others acquired similar machines.

As soon as they were able to, many of the young people of the district obtained summer employment away from home. Snæbjörn Halldorson, then a lad of sixteen, walked to the Portage plains, where he worked during the summer for thirteen dollars per month. Hjalmur Danielson, also at the age of sixteen, worked on a farm for a year, receiving forty dollars in wages. For this he bought a cow and a gun, thus demonstrating that one may save on forty dollars a year. In the decade before the first world war, many went out harvesting in the Portage and Argyle districts, in Manitoba, and in North Dakota. Many found carpenter work in Winnipeg and a goodly number of these became highly skilled in their trade.

An account by Kari Byron, Reeve of the Municipality of Coldwell, relates the struggle of the pioneers to earn their livelihood. His father, Stefan (Bjornson) Byron, came to Shoal Lake in 1894. — Byron says in part:

"There were ten children in our family and we never had much money. We had ten to fifteen cows in a herd of over one hundred cattle and a flock of fifty to seventy-five sheep.

"Mother washed the wool, carded, spun and knitted it into mitts, socks, and underwear for the whole family. I remember she knitted also five heavy sweaters. For some years she made all our shoes from sheep-skin. She made butter from the milk of ten to fifteen cows. When the men were away she often milked all the cows. Milk was set in pans and churned by hand. The butter was salted and packed in barrels, and kept till fall. It was then taken out, worked over into pound prints and taken to Winnipeg, for exchange for flour, sugar, etc. My mother might make fifteen hundred pounds of butter in a whole summer."

This account has the particular merit of giving an impression of the part played by the womenfolk of Shoal Lake in the earlier days. But no mere farm drudges they, outdoor work was thrust on them only in case of urgent need, and they shared with the men in the development of the social and intellectual life of the community.

With the establishment of the creamery at Lundar, 1902, the settlers were able to dispose of their cream locally.

#### MAIL SERVICE

Mail service to Siberia was from Oak Point, the settlers arranging among themselves for transportation. When the first group moved south, in 1890, Seamo post office, founded July 1, 1887, was only seven miles distant, and the mail problem was considerably simplified. March 1, 1894, the first post office in the Icelandic settlement was founded. It was named Otto, in honor of a highly respected and well-liked merchant in Iceland, Otto Wathne. Nikulas Snædal was postmaster for one year; then Magnus Kristjanson became postmaster and continued to hold that position till he

moved to Lundar, in 1930. Veteran mail carrier of the early years at Otto, was Jon Vestdal, of Otto.

The heavy canvas mail bag, with its massive disc padlock, contained real treasures for the intellectually alert and news-hungry settlers; the Winnipeg Icelandic weeklies, *Heimskringla* (1886) and *Lögberg* (1888); the Icelandic Lutheran Synod periodical, *Sameiningin* (1886) and the liberal and Unitarian periodicals, *Dagsbrún* (1893) and *Heimir*; the weekly *Free Press*; the *Family Herald* and *Weekly Star*, old country Icelandic papers, such as *Isafold*; the *Nor' West Farmer* and *Farmer's Advocate*; letters from the other Icelandic settlements and from Iceland, and, not to be omitted, the bulky, highly informative T. Eaton Company catalogue. — There were also books for private libraries and for the community library. On mail days, first one, then two a week, the post office was thronged, a lively community centre.

#### TRADE

The early settlers took their produce to Stonewall and to Winnipeg. Trips were usually made twice a year, in the spring and in the fall. The distance would average about eighty miles, depending on the condition of the ground, with ten miles added for Siberia. These journeys were made in groups, and the night-bivouacs on the road were usually pleasurable occasions, marked by jollity and merriment. Often the journey was broken at Frank Ward's and then the floor would be overlaid by the closely packed figures of the sleepers. Perhaps the Wards understood the important social service they rendered the Shoal Lake community.

The English settlers along Shoal Lake were generally very hospitable to the Icelandic travellers. One person farther south on one occasion showed himself in a different light. Magnus Kristjanson and Bjorn Hordal were travelling to Winnipeg, the former accompanied by



his sister, Mrs. Daniel Backman, and her very young son. Near Stonewall a raging storm swept down on the travellers. They had a tent, not large enough to accommodate all, so Hordal sought shelter in a nearby house. He was at first refused admission, but walked in regardless and succeeded in staying overnight. Once during the night the tent blew down, but the journey was renewed without further mishap. The ground between Stonewall and Winnipeg had been badly flooded and during the night surface ice had formed. Kristjanson walked ahead of his team of horses, over twenty miles to Winnipeg, breaking the ice for them.

Three Stonewall merchants with whom the Shoal Lake pioneers dealt in the early days were Musgrove, Montgomery, and Bruce. One of the three remarked at one time that of all those Icelandic settlers who had received credit from him, only one failed to honor his obligation.

In 1903, Fred Olsen, who had previously taught at Markland, opened a store in the Vestfold district. Three or four years later, Magnus Kristjanson followed suit, at Otto, and then Bjorn Lindal, at Markland. When the last segment in the northern part of the district filled in, and Stony Hill post office was established, the postmaster, Guðmundur Johnson, opened a store. Jón H. Johnson of Hove, who had commenced dealing in fish at Big Island in 1892, continued in that business after his move to Shoal Lake, in 1902. In 1910-11 he bought forty carloads of fish on Lake Manitoba, in the face of keen competition.

Magnus Kristjanson's store served for some time the western and northern part of the settlement, and also the Swedish settlement at Lillesve. Also, groups of Metis from St. Laurent, on their annual trapping and hunting expedition to the Fisher Branch district, chose to deal there, finding prices more to their liking than at St. Laurent.

The Canadian Northern reached Oak Point in 1904 and the Stonewall-Winni-

peg expeditions became a thing of the past, a memory of pioneering days. When the railway was extended to Lundar, trade moved to that place.

A story within the story of trade in the Shoal Lake district, is the account of a vision that was not destined to fulfilment. Magnus Kristjanson was greatly possessed by the co-operative ideal, and was well-versed in the story of the Rochdale pioneers. He took the initiative in forming the Coldwell Farmers' Company. The members of this small group appreciated the benefit of the undertaking, but in the nature of things it could no survive unless located at a railroad point, and when Lundar grew, its fate was sealed.

#### EDUCATION

The first school district to be organized in Shoal Lake was that of Vestfold, formed March 19, 1894. In that year, there was an attendance of eleven. The first teacher was Lena Johnson.

Markland school district was organized Jan. 1, 1895. In that year the school remained open forty-five days, and the total attendance was seventeen. The first teacher was John J. Bildfell. He joined the gold-rush to the Yukon and the next teacher was Bjorg Thorkelson, the first Icelandic person to attend Normal school in Canada, and a classmate of Nellie Mooney (Mrs. Nellie McClung).

In 1903 three school districts were organized, namely: Norður Stjarna, Háland, and Maple.

For many years all these schools were open only during the summer months and the pupils were often required to miss school for a period to help with the haying.

The establishment of the school marked the opening of a new world to the young generation. First, there was the language. Although most of the parents had acquired some command of the English language, Icelandic had been spoken in the homes. Now English in the classroom and English on the play-

ground lent wings to the acquisition of the language. Then there was social behavior, learning not to talk in the crowded classroom, learning to get on in a crowd, learning team-play. There were the Victorian readers, very good literature, with "The Great Stone Face" and "Gray's Elegy". There was the ever growing library, augmented after each school concert, with the Henty books and the Abbott historical series, Dickens, Sir Walter Scott, and others. There were the spelling matches and the geography matches, marked by keen rivalry, and lasting sometimes from last recess to four-thirty, before the victors were decided. There was the mock municipal council, with candidates for election making the usual pre-election promises to do their best if returned. There were the recess periods, when the children rushed pell-mell to play a variety of games, baseball, football, knobbies, high-over, and pomp-pomp-pullaway. There were the practices for field day: marching and track and field events. Boys of twelve who had walked a mile or two to school, and had to walk home, and then go for the cows, did not hesitate to practice the two mile run at noon. There were the field-days, when perhaps eight or ten schools took part and competition was keen, in sports and in school work. There were the fall concerts, when the pupils would sing, and recite, and take part in plays and skits.

The children were generally eager to learn. Miss Stefanson, now Mrs. Dr. Sommerville, of Winnipeg, in speaking of her experiences at the Norður Stjarna school, once remarked that despite the unfinished condition of the building, and the lack of equipment, (there was a time when boxes and blocks of wood had to be used for seats for the overflow), "it was the loveliest school I ever taught in. The children wanted to go to school."

The teacher's personality and teaching ability are more important than academic brilliance. When Miss Stefanson came to the Norður Stjarna school,

she was seventeen years of age, and had only grade X standing, but she maintained salutary discipline, and won the respect and warm regard of her pupils. Later, during the first world war, J. Magnus Bjarnason, the well known author, taught at the same school, and Rev. Guðmundur Arnason, noted intellectual and religious leader, taught for a period at Markland school, and greatly influenced the lives of their pupils.

A large number of the immediate descendants of the Shoal Lake pioneers proceeded to higher education. Some of these, to a considerable extent, had to earn their own way through college. Hjalmur Danielson, son of Daniel Sigurðson, graduated from the University of Manitoba, in 1915. Jón V. Straumfjörð, grandson of Johann Straumfjörð, was outstanding at the university in his day and was awarded the Governor-General's medal. His cousin and friendly rival for academic honors, Agnar Magnusson, won the gold medal in Mathematics and Latin in his final year, and was awarded a five hundred dollar post-graduate scholarship at the University of Manitoba, in 1924. He was at one time Manitoba chess champion. Wilhelm Kristjanson, son of Magnus Kristjanson, was I.O.D.E. scholar at Oxford University, in 1925. Kristjan Sigurdson, son of Sigfus Sigurdson, graduated from Wesley College. Successful practicing physicians are: Jon V. Straumfjörð; Kjartan Johnson, son of Einar Johnson; Guðmundur Paulson, son of Páll Pálsson, and Arnold Holm, grandson of Daniel Sigurdson. Drs. Petur and Vilhjalmur Guttormson and Dr. Kristjan J. Backman are sons, respectively of Vigfus J. Guttormson and Daniel Backman who resided in the district temporarily.

#### RELIGION

In the first years of settlement, religious services, conducted by laymen, were held in the various homes, in turn.

The brothers, Kristjan and Daniel Sigurðson, and also Guðmundur Einarsson, performed baptism and conducted fun-

eral services. A wedding, however, necessitated a trip to Winnipeg.

Occasionally, theology candidates visited the district. Ingvar Búason, who made a visit in 1895, customarily walked the distance from Winnipeg.

The majority of the settlers were Lutheran, but in 1893, when the liberal church periodical "Dagsbrún" commenced publication, there were subscribers in Shoal Lake.

In 1906, the Icelandic Lutheran Synod took steps to form a congregation at Lundar and in the years immediately following, theology candidates conducted services in Shoal Lake.

In 1913, through the work of Rev. Carl Olson, a Lutheran congregation was formed at Otto. A church was built, almost altogether with voluntary donations and voluntary labor. Trustees were: Kristjan Sigurðson, Philip Johnson, Brynjólfur Johnson, Guðmundur Johnson. Jón Jónasson was secretary. Hergeir Danielson was an exceptionally active worker in the congregation. Rev. Hjörtur Leo, who was stationed at Lundar, served the congregation for many years. He had the love of his people, and is remembered for his kindness and warm human sympathy, idealism and sensitive feeling for nature, as well as for his brilliant scholarship and keen intellect.

Rev. Rögnvaldur Pétursson was active in promoting the organization of Unitarian congregations in the Inter-Lake district, and in 1909, a Unitarian congregation was formed at Otto.

Members of the New Iceland contingent, who had been influenced by Rev. Magnus Skaptason, were prominent in the development; including Pétur Bjarnason, Johann Straumfjörð, and Einar and Oddfríður Johnson. A church was built in 1915, mainly with voluntary labor. Charter members numbered about thirty, but by 1913 the membership had increased to sixty-three.

Rev. Albert E. Kristjansson, from Gimli, was the first Unitarian minister to be appointed to a charge in the district, and he

took up residence there. In Unitarian circles in Chicago, he was known as the Bishop of the North. He possessed a strong personality, and was earnest in his work, and an impressive speaker. He had strong humanitarian convictions, and was a zealous advocate of social reform.

With the passing of the years what slight lines of division there were between Lutherans and Unitarians in community life have faded in the light of mutual tolerance.

### THE COMMUNITY LIBRARY

A community library, or reading society, "Mentahvöt" (lit. incentive to culture), was formed in Siberia, and continued its activities on the migration to Shoal Lake. The chief promoter and first librarian, was Jón Jónatansson.

One of the articles of the constitution states: "The purpose of the organization shall be to promote culture, increase desire to read, and to maintain the Icelandic language as far as possible."

The annual subscription fee was at first one dollar, but later this was reduced to seventy-five cents. In 1896, there were eighteen members. The first concert in aid of the library was held in February 1896. This was a tombola, and the proceeds amounted to \$17.65. This was also the first concert in the settlement at which admission was charged. Concerts in aid of the library continued to be held, apparently every year, until the outbreak of the Great War.

In 1905, the society "Mentahvöt" combined forces with the Young People's Society "Verðandi" to build a community hall.

The library was soon established in four subdivisions, the books being exchanged periodically. In 1911, there were over three hundred volumes in the library, and ultimately this number increased to nearly a thousand.

Some books were bought direct from Iceland, but in the main they came from Halldor Bardal's book store in Winnipeg.

An idea of the contents and value of the community library may be derived from information given by Guttormur Guttormsson to Watson Kirkconnell, and quoted by him in his brochure, "A Skald in Canada".

"At Shoal Lake I had access to a large and well-chosen collection of books, and made the fullest use of it the whole time I was there. There I read Homer in the translation of Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Benedikt Gröndal; Milton's *Paradise Lost* in the translation of séra Jón Thorlákson; the "Thousand and One Nights" in the translation of Steingrímur Thorsteinson, as well as all the Icelandic sagas, Eddas, Sturlunga, etc. There I first read "Nýárs nótt" (New Year's Night), a fairy play by Indriði Einarsson, and it seemed to me to surpass anything I had ever encountered in Icelandic drama. Altogether, I had there a choice of the best Icelandic literature."

The library contained the ancient sagas, modern Icelandic writers in prose and poetry, and numerous translations of both classical and popular works from English, Norwegian, and other languages. There were the fascinating folk tales compiled by Jón Arnason, *Thirty Adventures and Seventeen Adventures*; a world history; the philosophical works of Ágúst Bjarnason; popular literature such as the Allan Quatermain stories, by Rider Haggard; *Sherlock Holmes*, and *Around the World in Eighty Days*; the poetry of Jónas Hallgrímsson, Matthías Jochumsson and Einar Benediktsson; some of the plays of Shakespeare, and high-class periodicals such as "Óðinn", "Kvöldvökur" (*Evening Watches*), and "Unga Ísland" (*Young Iceland*). The arrival of new books and change-over day were a source of keen pleasure, and many members of the Shoal Lake community library "Mentahvöt" could indeed say with Keats, "Much have I travelled in the realm of gold".

Two men, perhaps more than all others, deserve to have their names mentioned for service to the community in

building such a splendid library. Björn Thorsteinson, a lover of poetry, was librarian and a member of the selection committee for a great many years. He was charter member and is still a member. The other is Hjalmur Danielson, who for many years was secretary-treasurer and member of the selection committee. The influence of such men is incalculable.

#### THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY

The Young People's Society "Verðandi" (in Norse mythology, one of the three Fates) was formed, January 9, 1902, with an original membership of twenty. The promoter of its foundation was a young man named Johannes Halldorson, who had come from Iceland in 1893. He was of an inventive turn, a book-lover, possessed great zeal for learning, and had obtained considerable education without benefit of formal instruction. The first executive was composed as follows: President, Johannes Halldorson; Secretary, Guðmunda Johnson; Treasurer, Hjalmur Danielson; Director of Physical Training, Bjorn Hordal, and others. The yearly fee was twenty-five cents. In the first year ten meetings were held.

The original purpose of the society was to promote mental and physical culture, including wrestling, boxing, football, and dancing. This ambitious physical culture programme was realized only to a limited extent and after the first year and a half the society concentrated on mental culture. At the meetings there were debates, recitations, and practice in relating stories and giving the gist of articles.

In the first year meetings were held variously in school-houses and in private homes. It was then decided to embark on the project of building a hall. Concerts were held to secure funds.

In the spring of 1905 there were eighteen members in the society and seventy dollars in the treasury. It was thus considered too great an undertaking for the



society alone to erect the hall. The co-operation of the Community library organization "Mentahvöt" was sought, and obtained. The site selected, on the homestead of Bjorn Thorsteinson, was approximately in the centre of the district.

Each society contributed seventy dollars from its treasury; subscriptions were raised among members, and certain non-members volunteered financial support.

All carpenter work and all transportation of supplies, including lumber, from a distance of twenty miles, were donated. The building, 26' x 40', was completed in the summer. Later a refreshment room, 14' x 20', was added. The name given was Markland Hall. Throughout the next decade, until the outbreak of war, the Young People's Society was very active, and its concerts and plays, as well as those of "Mentahvöt", were the highlight of the year's entertainment.

#### THE FARMERS' INSTITUTE

In 1903, the Manitoba Government Department of Agriculture sent Mr. B. B. Olson of Gimli, to Shoal Lake as its representative, to give a lecture on farming. Previously, representatives had been sent for the same purpose. At the conclusion of Olson's lecture, delivered at the home of Jón Vestdal, the speaker urged the settlers to form a Farmers' Institute. Several of those present promptly gave their names and an active canvas for members was conducted. September 26, 1903, Olson returned for an organization meeting. There was an initial membership of sixty.

The president of the new organization was Bergþor Thordarson; the secretary-treasurer, Petur Bjarnason. Both these men had belonged to a farmers' Institute and were keen on forming such an organization in their new district.

A veterinary branch was soon established. Bjorn Hordal was in charge for many years, and did good work. Subsequently Sigurður Holm, son of Daniel

Sigurðson, took charge, and brought to this work rare skill and an ever-growing fund of self acquired knowledge, even performing difficult operations on cattle with the use of anaesthetics.

The Institute secured the use of a pure-bred "Government-bull" and was active in promoting improvement of stock, and also agriculture, as well as in attempting to combat the persistent scourge of coyotes, who were all too successful in their depredation against the flocks of sheep in the district.

#### WOMEN'S SOCIETIES

Two Women's Societies were formed in the district, "Hlín", at Markland, and "Frækornið", at Otto about 1908. What went on behind the silken curtain at their meetings mere man does not profess to know, but both these organizations flourished for many years, were helpful toward those in need and supported worthy community causes. The "Hlín" held its concerts at Markland Hall; "Frækornið" at the Norður Stjarna school.

First President of "Frækornið" by unanimous choice, and President for many years after, was Mrs. Margret Sigurðson. Prominent also in the society were: Oddfriður Johnson (Mrs. Einar Johnson) and Asta Straumfjörð (Mrs. Ingimundur Sigurðson).

A unique feature of the society is the fact that its members belonged to both the local Lutheran and Unitarian congregations, and contributions were made equally to both churches.

#### THE SHOAL LAKE BRASS BAND

A brass band of eleven members was formed on the initiative of the poet Guttormur J. Guttormsson, supported by his brother, Vigfus. Guttormur was the first bandmaster. When, for reasons of health, he had to give up playing, Luther Lindal became leader.

The band made a notable contribution to entertainments at Markland Hall. Its concerts were looked forward to with

much pleasure, and it held a place in the affections of the community, comparable, perhaps, to that of the Sousa Band in the regard of its larger and more cosmopolitan audiences.

The truth of Longfellow's verse, beginning:

"I shot an arrow into the air;

It fell to earth, I know not where"

has, incidentally, been well illustrated in the case of the founder of the Shoal Lake Brass Band. Two of its members, Hermann Johnson and Thorsteinn Johnson, later moved to Lundar, where they organized a band of approximately twenty instruments. When war broke out, many of these Lundar boys joined the 223rd Battalion. They were then ready recruits for the band of that unit, and formed an important part of it.

#### THE I.O.G.T. LODGE "BERGLINDIN"

In the earliest years in Shoal Lake, there were few who drank to excess, and the prevailing tone of the district was one of sobriety. As the second generation grew to manhood, and supplies became more accessible, there was an increase in drinking, and there was some evidence of this at concerts.

Two very active Good Templar lodges had been organized among the Icelandic community in Winnipeg, "Hekla" in 1887, and "Skuld" in 1888. Certain members of these lodges took up residence

in Shoal Lake, including Sigurður and Sigríður Holm and Sigurbjörn (son of Kristján Sigurðson) and Sigurborg Kristjanson. These formed a strong nucleus for a lodge, "Berglindin", organized by Paul Reykdal in Shoal Lake, 1911. The initial membership was about twenty. In 1912 this had increased to thirty-six. Mrs. Holm sewed virtually all the regalia for the officers of the lodge.

Meetings were held fortnightly, on Sunday afternoons, generally at Markland Hall. Members attended from the far reaches of the settlement, nine miles to the east (Kristján Danielson) and six or seven miles to the north and west.

The "Berglindin" flourished and most of the members were regular in attendance. There were many youthful members, and these derived special benefit from their association with zealous workers in a moral cause, and from their acquaintance with ritual, and participation in the programmes, a regular feature of every meeting. Also the benefit fund was well maintained, by proceeds from concerts held for that purpose, and on one occasion a donation of twenty-five dollars was made towards the hospital expenses of a member.

The programmes and the informal games at the meetings were a source of pleasure, and this helped to retain the interest of the younger members.

ED. NOTE — This is the first of two articles on Shoal Lake. Interesting items in the second part will be: Social Life, Literature, Athletics, Politics, and the First World War.

## THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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